

The Temptation of Adam and Eve

Genesis 3:1-7

Genesis 3:1-7: *"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"* ² *And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"* ⁴ *Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. ⁵ 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.'* ⁶ *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. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings."*

Background Notes

Is this account of the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to be taken literally, or is this merely an "Old Testament parable" or allegory? After all, who ever heard of a talking snake? Well, we believe this account is *real history*. And we believe that it is to be taken *literally*. It is *not* a parable with symbolic language.

The serpent actually talked to Eve. Satan possessed the body of a serpent. He then approached Eve and spoke to her through the means of the serpent. "Now, wait a minute," you say, "How do we know this was Satan?" Satan is not mentioned by name once in this chapter - did you realize that? We know that it was Satan from the rest of Scripture. Revelation 12:9 is a just one of many verses of Scripture that connect Satan and the serpent: *"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world..."*

Why did Satan choose the body of a serpent? Why not a nice friendly animal? Verse 1 tells us that the serpent was more naturally "cunning" (or crafty) than any other animal the Lord had made. Thus the serpent suited Satan's purpose more than any other creature that God had created. Furthermore, before mankind's sin and the judgment that followed, the serpent did not slither along the ground. It seems that serpents walked, or moved in an upright manner. The serpent must have been a beautiful creature before God's judgment in the Garden of Eden.

As we read this chapter, another question logically comes to mind: "Where did Satan come from?" Other passages in the Bible (specifically Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28) inform us that Satan was created as an unfallen lofty holy angel - but his pride in his beauty and position caused him to rebel against God. It may have been the creation of man in the image of God that triggered proud Satan's jealousy. In any case, Satan's strategy in the Garden of Eden was to lure man away from the

loving and serving God, and instead come under the control and mastery of Satan himself. Satan's plan worked - but the result was not what he intended.

Doctrinal Points

1. Satan's tactics are the same today as they were in the Garden of Eden.

Paul warned the Corinthians about Satan's cunning tactics in 2 Corinthians 11:3 - *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.* Just as Satan's tactics in the Garden of Eden were crafty and deceitful, so Satan's tactics today are wily, crafty and deceitful. Ephesians 6:11 says, *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [schemes] of the devil."*

Notice that Satan tried to get Eve to question God's Word and God's goodness: *"Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (v1).* And: *"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" (v5).* Satan tried to get Eve to question God's Word and God's goodness with a deceptive message, saying (in essence): "Eve, are you sure God said these things? Well if He did, that's not very nice! God is holding out on you. He has put limits on you because He doesn't want you to be truly free. How can God be good?"

Does that sound familiar? That's the same line Satan uses today! Satan tempts us with ideas such as, "Do you really think that the Bible is the Word of God? You've got to be kidding! If the Bible is the Word of God, what kind of God is that? All those laws and restrictions! And you say that God is *good*? Listen, throw away all those restraints and follow me. I'll give you all the freedom you want. In fact, you can be your own god!" That big lie is the same today as it was in the Garden of Eden: "You can become like God" (v5).

Notice how Satan mixed truth and error. He said, *"You will not surely die" (v4).* That was a straight-out lie! God had said in no uncertain terms, *"for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (2:17)* - but Satan told Eve they wouldn't die. That was a lie -- but notice that Satan craftily slipped in that lie by adding *"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" (v5).* He added some truth to that lie. Their eyes would be opened, and they would know good and evil - but not in the same way that God knows good and evil.

Here's an illustration: A doctor knows about cancer and so does a cancer patient. Each knows about cancer, but not in the same way. The doctor knows the causes, symptoms and possible treatments for cancer, but the patient **has** the disease of cancer within his or her body, and the patient experiences its deadly effect. Do you see the point of the illustration? God is like the doctor and we are the cancer patients. Adam and Eve would lose their state of innocence, and they would know evil experientially. From that day on, they would **not** be able **not** to do evil - because they would have acquired the disease of sin.

Satan's tactic of mixing truth and error is the same today as it was then. All false doctrine has some truth deceptively mixed in with error. Satan's tactics are the same today as they were in the Garden of Eden.

2. Man's temptations are the same today as they were in the Garden of Eden.

"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" (v6).

Notice the three areas of temptation that appealed to Eve. The fruit of the forbidden tree was **good for food**. The fruit of the forbidden tree **looked good!** The fruit of the forbidden tree could **make one wise**. These were the three areas of temptation. Eve yielded, and so did Adam.

Read 1 John 2:16 - mankind's temptations today are the same as they were in the Garden of Eden. 1 John 2:16 - *"For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."* Do you see the same three areas of temptation? The lust or strong desire of the flesh - Eve saw that the forbidden tree would taste great! The lust of the eyes - Eve saw that the forbidden tree looked beautiful and desirable. The pride of life - Eve saw that the forbidden tree could make one wise or successful. Satan's temptations today are the same as they were in the Garden of Eden.

Read Matthew 4 and Luke 4. Our Lord was tempted in these same three areas - but He did not yield! In each case Satan mixed truth with error by quoting Scripture out of context. Satan suggested that Christ turn the stones into bread - an appeal to the appetites of the flesh. And the Lord resisted. Then Satan showed Christ all the cities of the world and their glory and offered them to Him – he appealed to the desire for wealth and gain. The Lord resisted. Finally Satan suggested that the Lord jump off the pinnacle of temple and be miraculously preserved - an appeal to the pride of life, or instant success and popularity. Again, Satan quoted Scripture out of context, and again the Lord resisted!

In all three areas, as He resisted, the Lord quoted Scripture *properly* to refute Satan. He didn't yield in the slightest way. What an example for us as we face temptations in these same three areas! Remember, man's temptations are the same today as they were in the Garden of Eden.

Practical Application

Are you still wearing fig leaves?

“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings” (v7). Adam and Eve fell from their state of innocence. They experienced guilt. They realized that they were naked, and they tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. But God can see through fig leaves!

Are you still wearing fig leaves? This question could be asked of Christians and non-Christians alike. If you are not a Christian, are you still wearing fig leaves? Are you still trying to hide your spiritual nakedness behind fig leaves of your own making? Maybe the fig leaves of good works, or even religion? Listen - God can see through your fig leaves! He sees your sin. He sees your spiritual nakedness. You need to trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

There's a lesson here for Christians, too. Many Christians wear masks. We pretend to be something or someone that we're not. We have our “Sunday mask.” We have our “model parent mask.” We have our “happy Christian mask.” How many are wearing a mask right now?

Many Christians wear masks. We try to hide out true character from each other, and the most amazing thing is that we think we can hide our true character from God!

Masks are like fig leaves, and God can see through masks just as He saw Adam and Eve's sin through the fig leaves! We need to let God change our character so we don't have to wear masks. It's a good question for all of us, isn't it? Are you still wearing fig leaves?