

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?

The Temptation of Eve

Genesis Chapter Three
(Part 1)

Introduction to the Fall:

There are four different viewpoints from which we can view *The Fall* of humanity: 1) Eve who was deceived; 2) Adam who followed his wife's actions and *willingly* disobeyed God; 3) Satan who tempted them both but differently; and 4) God who knew the fall would occur and, yet, allowed it to unfold. As we study *The Fall* we will look into all four perspectives. It is my hope, that by doing this, we will discover many important points that can help us grow stronger and understand spiritual warfare even more and our responsibility to God and others.

As we leave chapter two there is no time frame given as to how long the man and woman was in the garden. We have no idea how long Adam and Eve enjoyed paradise. Was it a day, a week, a year, thousands of years? (An age is given for Adam at the end of his life, but we do not know if those years included his time before The Fall. Since there was no death before the fall it is plausible that age became part of Adam's existence only after he had sinned. There is no way to be certain, because the Bible does not make this point plain). The Bible doesn't tell us specifically how long Adam and Eve enjoyed the blessedness of Eden and their relationship with God before they sinned. Chapter three opens with the actions of the fall unfolding before our eyes.

"Yea, hath God said...?" This is Satan's question to Eve. As far as we know there was no other conversation prior to this point. Satan's question has a two point agenda. His first objective is to place doubt; it is to deceive Eve, to confuse her.

Just a side note: the moment that a spirit of doubt enters faith is already diminishing. There is nothing wrong with asking questions. Asking a question is to gain insight and information and to deepen our experience in God; however, when there is defensiveness to our asking or an attitude of "show me!!" we have already slipped into doubting and our faith is in danger. The second purpose of his question is to imply limitedness, and is posed to create a feeling of loss as if God has taken away some important privilege; again, this is a trick to confuse her.

Pause for a moment: Do you think Satan is still using the same tactics (using doubt and limitedness) today as with the first humans? How many times are you tempted to doubt what you have learned about God; what you think you know to be true about God? Are there times

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you are tempted to believe God is taking something from you? Or that God is keeping you from something that you really, *really* want or that you believe would be good for you?

It is easy to see that Satan's tactics are not really that different today as when he first started troubling humankind. Why aren't we, as Christians, more astute to his games? Spiritual warfare is real and if we could grasp this concept we would be able to stand against Satan's antics so much easier.

Nevertheless, in Eve's defense she does pass the first test!! She responds with the Word of God. Yet, Eve added to the word of God; she says something we hadn't heard before in the scriptures leading up to chapter three. Why did she add to what she had been told? Was it pride? Was it vanity? Was it wrong information from she heard from Adam?

Well, let's focus on what we do know: She is having a conversation with the enemy! This alone tells us something is *already* wrong. Why is the tempter there? Where did he come from? How did he get in? These are the details to the storyline that we are not provided. We can gap fill as many have done, but that is to spend a lot of energy in a direction that may or may not serve us well. So, what can we do in this case? We can do what any good investigator does. We can focus and *study what we do know*; we can examine the facts that we do have. Why? Because the evidence left behind will begin to paint a picture of what happened, when, how, and most importantly the *why*; *which is the* motive involved—and the take away we are intended to have from the story being revealed to us.

Many times while reading Genesis people can get sidetracked or completely derailed. For some, there are just too many arguments about details that we, as humans, will never have the complete answers. Think, again, about an investigator, a teacher, or an HR professional who is given the task to find out what happened so the right decision can be made about discipline, job security, or company advancement. Though they will *never* know *all* the details to *every* event or the exact order or time each event took place they can gain enough knowledge about an event or situation to know how to precede or how to respond—what action needs to follow.

In the book of Genesis we have the amazing story of creation, but we also have *The Fall*. At this point we are not given the details about a fall in heaven—that comes later. We are not warned about Satan—that comes later. In the Genesis we see *The Fall* as it unfolds. There is something significant about seeing the story from this viewpoint. We see the man and the woman in their innocence and we see their perfection *and then* we see them throw it all away *for the hope to be a god*. We watch, in essence, **the emotional pull to no longer need the ONE true God, because one can be satisfied with becoming one's own god**. We see the struggle for *something more* than they already have been given. This is an important point; and can be as

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true for Adam and Eve's struggle as it is for our own today. I believe that is why the story is told as it is told; with no background so we are caused to pause and reflect.

Let us take a short moment to reflect now: How many times are we tempted to take matters into our own hands before even thinking about taking it to God? How many times do we see going to God as a weakness in our society (as if it is a fairytale or like going to Santa Clause)? How many times a day are you and I tempted to be our own god? Or how many times are we tempted to want something "more" than is already ours to have?

Some have said Eve added to the word of God which meant, according to them, that she did not know the word of God and it was her lack of knowledge which made her susceptible to Satan's trickery. Certainly, I can agree that it possible she may not have fully known the word of God and this made her vulnerable to Satan's attack. The main point, of those who take this stance, is that if we do not hide God's word in our heart we will sin against Him, because we are defenseless against the wiles of Satan.

Yet, perhaps she did understand God's command. Maybe Eve's addition of the words, "Don't even touch it!" came from her deeper understanding of just how dangerous the tree was and the severity of God's warning about it. What we are able to gather from her response is that she did understand—do not eat from it, do not touch it, and do not get near it because to do so will kill you!!!! (Gen 2:16-17). Eve had a strong belief about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and it was: This tree is so bad—**Don't even touch it!!!**

This is the age of innocence but innocence does not imply "stupid" or ignorant. It means they did not know sin; meaning they had not experienced sin. Sin takes away innocence. Concerning Eve and her understanding about the Tree of Knowledge we must consider this important point: No place in the Bible does it ever state that God told Eve anything about the Tree of Knowledge; nor did God say He had previously told Eve when He speaks to her in the Garden after she had eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. However, there are *three* different verses where God does directly speak to Adam about not eating from the tree. So, we are left to conclude that what Eve did know about the tree must have been taught to her from Adam. So, if it wasn't a lack of being instructed about the tree there must be something else at work here...but what?

To understand we must go to the New Testament and view the temptation of Jesus:

Jesus responds **with the Word of God** when tempted by Satan. Certainly, this is the answer. Eve, clearly, didn't *fully* do this. So, it is possible that she was misquoting what she had been told, or perhaps the extra emphasis about "not touching" is part of Adam's instructions to her. Regardless, of the extra words she stated "do not touch" we see that she did attempt to

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withstand Satan with the Word of God. However, Jesus was tempted three times and three times he responded in the same way: “God hath said....” Eve only responded that way once, and then stopped!!!!!!! When Satan came back at her she was hooked by him. Why??

Pause to Reflect: Are there times in your own life you can withstand the enemy when he comes tempting the first go around, but you seem to have no steam left for round two and three? This is what happened to Eve!! This has nothing to do with not knowing the Word of God, but it has everything to do with not allowing it to be the governing force in our life.

Let’s see if we can find some answers in the **Temptation of Jesus**...and how the events in the Garden of Eden and His temptation in the wilderness mirror each other; this is not by accident.

Matthew 4:4 Jesus is first tempted to eat bread. Similar to Eve Jesus is asked to eat something; to ingest something. In Eve’s case she could eat from any tree in the Garden but one. Jesus was fasting and to eat any bread, even if it had once been a stone was not to be eaten. However, Jesus’ response was clear...***there is something more important than food*** and it is the nourishing effects of God’s Word on the Human heart and life. Jesus being tempted to eat during a fast is showing the importance of food in relationship to God in our lives—even food the very substance of life to the physical body is not to be chosen over God. Jesus demonstrates by His actions that the commandments of God *are* the saving and keeping force of life!

There is also another example here for us to see: This has to do with our free-will. Jesus could have turned the stones into bread; He was God in the flesh. This fact, is so huge. Though He was God, in that moment, He had given His own human flesh, the same boundaries as our own; therefore, He ***could be tempted to use*** His own free-will in a way that would have been less than righteous. To use His free-will to prove anything to anyone, especially Satan, would have been prideful. So, turning the stones into bread would have been an exploitive use of His human free-will.

Matthew 4:6 Satan is undeterred by one rejection. He had seen that kind of resolve before; in the Garden, so he went immediately to the second part of his deception as he did with Eve. When he told Eve “you will not surely die” he uses the same tactics on Jesus. He tells Jesus to “throw yourself down.” He was saying to Jesus, “You will not surely die, because the angels will catch you before you hit the ground.”

It’s important to stop and note here:

(Remember, the TV show, Undercover Boss: as an undercover boss the CEO undergoes a transformation. He must go unnoticed for who he fully is and he must find out if the events and tactics of his organization are fair, equitable, efficient, useful, etc. He subjects himself or

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herself to the same treatment, humiliation, frustrations that the common people of his or her workforce deal with in a particular job within the company. The whole premise of the show is to see if the CEO can undergo or live up to the demands and the challenges of the everyday life of an employee within his/her company while remaining undercover or in disguise. This means that he or she can't pull the CEO card and get a special pass. In that moment, he or she is a human being crawling in a crawl space with snakes or rats, or climbing on the roof in a lightning storm, and experiencing what anyone who works for the company in that capacity would experience. In that moment he is a man or woman stripped of the high title of affluence and prestige, and for this brief moment in time, he is reduced to a regular person doing the duty assigned. In that moment, he or she fully embodies the character of technician, or specialist, or cashier, or cleaner, etc.).

The same is true with Jesus. Again, He was all man and all God. He was not part God and part man. He was not a demi god. He was almighty God robed, encased, embodied in flesh but in that moment of temptation he allowed all His splendor and glory to be laid aside (like the CEO we just spoke about in Undercover Boss) and while in the flesh, in that desert, He allowed Himself to feel the brunt of the tempter *the same way every human soul feels it* when the tempter comes, and in that moment he was a pure man, a clean man, a sinless man and when tempted He answered as Adam and Eve *should have answered*. "It is written...or God hath said..."

Think of this: He is God Almighty! He *is* the spoken Word. He is the embodiment of what He is quoting! Yet, in that moment he assigned himself to experiencing the life of a man and in that man flesh he would have to face the trials we face, the destitute situations we face, the hunger, the fears that all of humanity are accustomed; including, even free-will, yet, He is different in His approach to the enemies trickery and deceit.

The devil told Eve she could eat the fruit from the tree because she wouldn't *really* die. Eve doesn't interrupt the tempter ***instead she listens on***...in that moment Eve entered into a one-way conversation with the enemy (more on that in a future lesson). For now, it is enough to understand that Eve's voice went silent here, but Jesus' voice did not go silent!!

Satan goes on to say (similar to Jesus' third temptation giving to him all the riches and kingdoms of the world if he will just bow to Satan); that she and Adam will be like gods, and gods with power to know good and evil. They will be like God...or in other words.... **"You can be more than you already are!"** Wow, how that must have rung in her ears!! Again, Eve does not respond with the Word or Promises of God. Sadly, by this point, she is mesmerized by the tree. She no longer sees death when she looks at the tree because after listening to Satan's lies she sees herself—becoming more...becoming a god.

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Genesis 3: 6, *The Fall of Eve*

1. “saw the tree was good for food”
2. “It was pleasant to the eyes”
3. “to be desired”
4. “to make one wise”
5. She took the fruit and ate

The moment Eve chose to turn and look on the tree she was caught in the devil’s trickery. The tempter has never stopped and his tactics have never changed. **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*”).

Eve being tempted by her flesh, eyes, and pride...seen the tree was pleasant (thus her eyes), desired it (thus her flesh), because she believed it would give her something she didn’t have...the wisdom and nature of a god (ultimate pride of life).

It is important to remember: Satan comes in degrees...a little here and a little there...it is always a slow fade...a little wiggle room and just a little more until he’s taken up the whole space. Satan is, also, always hidden in the forbidden (as most ministers and pastors have taught). Satan always hides in the forbidden. So, the moment the forbidden catches our eyes we are in trouble—he’s already calling us, asking us...*really*? God says this little ole thing is wrong??? Really? Come on? It’s forbidden but it shouldn’t be; because it is just too much fun, or too delicious, or too desirable, or too intellectual, or too progressive, or too...fill in the blank.

Matthew 4:8 Satan offered Jesus a truce. Satan offered Jesus the world, a world where Jesus wouldn’t have to die to take back (even though Satan didn’t know what was in the mind of God or how God would accomplish the taking back of His world and people); nevertheless, **Jesus did know** and could have been tempted, in his human flesh, to take the easier way out, but He didn’t. Certainly, Satan willingly handing over the keys to this world would have been an easier route. Except that Jesus knew the truth. Jesus came to save a world that was marred by sin and where evil existed everywhere; He came to defeat Satan not worship him!!

What was Satan offering Jesus in exchange for His worship? He offered to give Jesus the world. He could only offer this if it was within Satan’s power to give it; otherwise, it is not *really* a temptation. So, what would be the sin (cost) involved with such a temptation? **False worship!!** Had Jesus bowed to Satan He would have been guilty of false worship. He also, tempted him with each temptation about his identity. “If thou be...” but with this temptation the blow was felt the strongest. He offers Jesus to become the ruler of the

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world—a god. He is telling Jesus, in essence, the same thing he told Adam and Eve. Satan was saying, listen to me, and I will help you become your *own* god. Why would this be a temptation? As a man Jesus' flesh would have to suffer humiliation, be beaten, mocked by His own creation, and killed. Satan was offering Him an easier way out. Now, Satan didn't fully know how Jesus planned to fulfill His mission, but Satan was trying to derail it before things went too far. REMEMBER: Satan doesn't know the full truth about our destination or our mission here, but he can see potential and it is our potential he is out to destroy!!!!!!

Satan was attempting to derail Jesus' human potential and influence on this earth. He approached him as he would have any man...pride of life...here....you can have this....look at the price tag...priceless....don't you want it? But Jesus didn't take the bait. Jesus didn't bow down to Satan's tactics. Instead, Jesus *sent* Satan away. This is what Eve failed to do!! It is also what we often fail to do!! Eve being empowered by God could have sent Satan away but she was caught in his web of lies by what his lies brought up in her own heart—lusts. Satan NEVER told Eve to bow down and worship him; she being pure and untouched by evil was too aware for that kind of approach. So, he disguised his true motives and made her believe she could become a god but the end result was that by her choices she did bow down to Satan—and Satan became her god—and, consequently, the god of this world. The same would have been true had Jesus, the God of glory in human flesh, bowed to Satan; Satan would have become His god.

So, what is left to say...so much more, but in the end...this life is our judgment. It is our life-lived that will judge us. Our actions here will judge/reveal our devotion. It will tell what mattered to us and what didn't. We can profess all we want, about whatever we want, but our life's work will reflect our devotion and what mattered to us.

At the end of it all, what ensnared Eve was her pride. Satan uses on humans the only thing he can use. He uses the path of his own down fall: **First**, he hungered to be a god. **Second**, he was willing to risk everything including being thrown out of heaven and destroyed to achieve it. **Third**, he believed he deserved to be a god—he used his own free-will to create rebellion to bring about worship for himself—ultimate pride. Yet, Satan's kingdom will never last and in the end he and everyone who chose to follow him will find that he was no god at all.

We must not forget his tactics *never* change. His lies are always the same old spin. So, in what ways is Satan tempting you to think you are better than this story in Genesis; that you would never do as they did? How does he tell you that you can be your own god? In what ways does he creep in and tell you to be the captain of your own ship? How does he try to get you to rely on just you, because you are all you need? In what subtle ways does he tell you not to be content with the life you have but to keep looking out there...wherever out there is?

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Pride kicked Satan out of Heaven. Pride kicked Adam and Eve out of Eden/Paradise. Pride, if we allow it, will do the same to us.

This is the final verse we will turn to on this topic, for now: 2 Corinthians 11:3. Satan beguiled Eve but from what? Her mind was corrupted so she could no longer see the simplicity of God. Her mind was strayed and she lost track of *who* God truly was and the work given to her in His kingdom. The same is true for us today, that is what Paul is saying to the Corinthian church members. Don't let Satan beguile you as he did Eve! Don't let your minds be corrupted to no longer understand the simplicity of Christ and your purpose in Him. His warning to them is as strong today to us! Amen!