

Genesis Chapter 3

Genesis 3:1 "Now the serpent was more subtile 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 serpent”:

The word means “snake.”

The apostle John identified this creature as Satan (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), as did Paul (2 Cor. 11:3).

The serpent, a manifestation of Satan, appears for the first time before the fall of man.

The rebellion of Satan, therefore, had occurred sometime after 1:31 (when everything in creation was good), but before 3:1.

See (Ezek. 28:11-15) for a possible description of Satan’s dazzling beauty and (Isaiah 14:13-14), for Satan’s motivation to challenge God’s authority (1 John 3:8).

Satan, being a fallen angel and, thus, a supernatural spirit, had possessed the body of a snake in its pre-Fall form (3:14 for post-Fall form).

The serpent was a creature made by God but used by Satan (John 8:44); 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:9; 20:2).

“More subtle”:

So delicate or precise as to be difficult to analyze or describe: Subtlety is a positive virtue when rendered “prudent” (Prov. 12:16, 23; 14:8, 15, 18; 22:3).

It is negative when rendered “crafty” (2:25; Job 5:12; 15:5).

In the prologue of Proverbs (1:4), one of the goals of the book is to “give subtilty [subtlety] to the simple” (Matthew 10:16).

“Unto the woman”:

She was the object of his attack, being the weaker one and needing the protection of her husband.

He found her alone and unprotected by Adam’s experience and counsel.

2 Tim. 3:6. Though sinless, she was temptable and seducible.

“Yea, hath God said”:

In effect Satan said, “is it true that He has restricted you from the delights of this place?

This is not like one who is truly good and kind.

There must be some mistake.”

He insinuated doubt as to her understanding of God’s will, appearing as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), to lead her to the supposed true interpretation.

She received him without fear or surprise, but as some credible messenger from heaven with the true understanding, because of his cunning.

More contemporarily: “Has God indeed said?”

It emphasizes his amazement that God would restrict man’s freedom of choice in the garden.

Satan centers on a restriction, casting doubt on God’s Word, and not emphasizing the fact that God said in 2:16 they might “freely eat” of all the trees.

This temptation, that Eve had, was like many temptations today.

You will notice that the serpent did not just come right out and say that God didn't say, or that He did say.

He just put a question in her mind.

You see, God really did not tell Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

He told Adam not to eat of the tree.

Eve's information was second hand from Adam, nevertheless, she was aware that they were not to eat of this tree.

Most temptation comes in a very tricky way, as Eve's did.

There are some writers that do not believe this was an actual serpent, but the punishment God puts on the serpent would be of no effect if he were not truly a snake.

People who try to do sneaky underhanded things are commonly known as a "snake in the grass", reaching right back to this Scripture where the serpent first got Eve to questioning this statement of God.

(Beware of those who are encouraging you to question your relationship with God, and especially with your church).

That is just a clever way to plant doubt.

Verse 2 tells us for sure that the woman knew the restrictions in the garden, even though she did not have firsthand Knowledge.

Verses 2-3

In her answer, Eve extolled the great liberty that they had; with only one exception, they could eat all the fruit.

Genesis 3:2 "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:"

Eve's reply reveals her carelessness with the wording of 2:16, as she belittles the privileges of God by leaving out the word that conveys the sense of "freely eat" and leaves out the word "all".

Genesis 3:3 "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."

"Not ... touch it":

An addition to the original prohibition as recorded (Gen. 2:17).

Adam may have so instructed her for her protection.

"Neither shall ye touch it":

By adding to His command, Eve exaggerates the limitations God had set forth.

Or it may just express the idea of consumption, with a parallel phrase used euphemistically of "touching a woman" (in Genesis 20:6; 26:29; Ruth 2:9 and proverbs 6:29).

The "lest ye die" reveals Eve's third error, and that was toning down the penalty and certainty of death for eating.

"Lest":

This expresses a fear of possibly dying when God had already expressed the certainty of it in 2:17 (thou shalt surely die)!

From the above words, we know that Eve knew the location of the tree.

She changed (or added to), the caution of God (neither shall ye touch it).

Her first mistake was listening, and then entering into conversation with him (the serpent).

So many of our problems in our church could be stopped, if we did not enter into conversation with those who are opposed to the church.

The devil has always been sneaky, and his tactics have not changed.

The best thing we can do is recognize the enemy and stay away.

DO NOT enter into conversation.

We have everything to lose and nothing to gain.

Verses 4-5

“Not surly die”:

Satan, emboldened by her openness to him, spoke this direct lie.

This lie actually led her and Adam to spiritual death (separation from God).

So Satan, is called a liar and murderer from the beginning (John 8:44).

His lies always promise great benefits (as in verse 5).

Eve experienced this result, she and Adam did know good and evil; but by personal corruption, they did not know as God knows in perfect holiness.

Genesis 3:4 "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:"

Here Satan blatantly denies God with the same strong Hebrew expression God used (in 2:17).

Once the serpent had her listening, then he called God a liar (indirectly of course).

The devil is the liar, and always has been.

God is truth.

Genesis 3:5 "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

It was technically true that their “eyes” would be “opened” (verses 7 and 22).

But the real problem was that their eyes were opened to behold all of things in the light of their own sinfulness.

“As gods” is better translated “as God,” which was true in that they would have a fixed moral nature like they knew evil, but were unable to resist it.

There has always been the temptation to be like God.

Here it suggests God is holding something back from Adam and Eve.

Again, he came to Eve with a half-truth.

Surely her eyes would or will be opened, but how horrible an opening.

He was thrown out of heaven himself for wanting to be God.

The flesh desires power and authority; the flesh must be controlled by the spirit, so as not to sin.

Many false teachers today again are saying that man will become God.

This has never been true.

God alone is God.

Secular humanism in our schools is teaching our children that they are their own god.

Satan is bringing a half-truth through our schools and many of our churches today, and we, like Eve, are falling for it.

She looked, she saw, she desired.

She had lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and worst of all, a desire to be as God.

Genesis 3:6 "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, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

“Good ... pleasant ... desired”:

She decided that Satan was telling the truth and she had misunderstood God, but she didn’t know what she was doing.

It was not overt rebellion against God, but seduction and deception to make her believe her act was the right thing to do (verse 13).

The New Testament confirms that Eve was deceived (2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14; Rev. 12:9).

“Did eat”:

A direct transgression with deception (see notes on 1 Tim. 2:13-14).

“When the woman saw”:

This was an evaluation process of the mind, for the tree “was good for food” (an appeal to appetite, or “lust of the flesh”); it was “pleasant to the eyes” (the same root word used in Exodus 20 in the law against coveting, as “lust of the eyes”); and it was “to be desired to make one wise” (the verb for desired is used in the law in Deut. 5 for coveting, and appeals to “pride of life,” 1 John 2:16).

“With her” may imply that the man was near all the time.

You see the lust of her eyes when she looked, the lust of appetite, (she ate), the lust for worldly wisdom (make one wise).

She was not satisfied to just ruin her standing with God; she included her husband as well.

Isn't that just the way of the sinner today, not satisfied to fall themselves, trying to drag someone else down with them.

Adam had the choice (he did not have to eat the fruit just because his wife did).

He knew the prohibition God had made; he ate the fruit anyway.

Genesis 3:7 "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."

“Opened ... knew ...sewed”:

The innocence noted in 2:25 had been replaced by guilt and shame (verses 8-10), and from then on, they had to rely on their conscience to distinguish between good and their newly acquired capacity to see and know evil.

The sense of guilt is immediate (2:25), and they attempt to make themselves presentable, to cover up their nakedness (verse 21).

As I said before, (part of what the serpent said was true) their eyes were opened to realize the terrible sin they had committed.

They suddenly were not innocent (they had sinned).

The first awful thing that they discovered, was that they were naked.

They sewed fig leaves to cover their nakedness, as we are about to see.

Genesis 3:8 "And they heard the voice of the LORD 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."

“Voice”:

Better translated “sound” as it appears in theophanies (a visible manifestation to humankind of God), in the Old Testament (Psalm 18:13; 29:3-9; Jeremiah 25:30; Ezekiel 1:24; Joel 3:16).

God appeared, as before, in tones of goodness and kindness, walking in some visible form (perhaps Shekinah light as He later appeared in Exodus 33:18-23; 34:5-8, 29; 40:34-38).

He came not in fury, but in the same condescending way He had walked with both Adam and Eve before.

“Cool of the day”:

And this may be understood as the “spirit of the day,” as the Hebrew word for cool is the same for spirit.

The day is a judgment day in the context.

No small wonder that as the sound of the LORD God was traversing back and forth in the garden seeking out Adam and Eve, they actively “hid themselves” from His “presence,” acknowledging that their intimate fellowship was broken (4:14; Psalm 139:7).

This is the first specific time it is mentioned that Eve heard God's voice.

God had come for fellowship.

Guilt and shame entered, and man and woman hid from God.

Just as it is today, there is no place to hide from God.

Be sure, your sin will find you out.

Genesis 3:9 "And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where [art] thou?"

“Where art thou”:

The question was God’s way of bringing man to explain why he was hiding, rather than expressing ignorance about man’s location.

Shame, remorse, confusion, guilt, and fear all led to their clandestine behavior.

There was no place to hide; there never is (see Psalm 139:1-12).

God always seeks out man, in the sense that He solicits a response from His Creation now separated from Him by sin.

Thus, God comes asking questions, not making accusations.

Genesis 3:10 "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I [was] naked; and I hid myself."

“Heard thy voice”:

The sound of 3:8, which probably was God calling for Adam and Eve.

Adam responded with the language of fear and sorrow, but not confession.

Adam heard the “sound” of the LORD God and “was afraid” (as most men are afraid of God today), and began the age long process of “hiding himself” from his Maker.

So many times, guilt of sins causes us not to come to God.

We feel we have done something so bad, that God will not listen and forgive.

You see, in verse 10, Adam's guilt and sin had caused a separation from God.

Genesis 3:11 "And he said, Who told thee that thou [wast] naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

Adam’s sin was evidenced by his new knowledge of the evil of nakedness, but God still waited for Adam to confess to what God knew they had done.

The basic reluctance of sinful people to admit their iniquity is here established.

Repentance is still the issue.

When sinners refuse to repent, they suffer judgment; when they do repent, that’s when they receive forgiveness.

Without knowledge of sin there is no guilt association.

Here God reminded Adam that his commandment was not just a request, but if disobeyed would be sin.

Genesis 3:12 "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Adam blamed the “woman” and God, since God was the one who brought her to Adam (in 2:22).

“The woman whom thou gavest”:

Adam pitifully put the responsibility on God for giving him Eve.

That only magnified the tragedy in that Adam had knowingly transgressed God’s prohibition, but still would not be open and confess his sin, taking full responsibility for his action, which was not made under deception (1 Tim. 2:14).

Adam is half accusing God.

He is saying if you hadn't given me this woman, I wouldn't have sinned.

He was trying to shift the blame to someone else.

He was trying to say he really wasn't to blame himself.

Genesis 3:13 "And the LORD God said unto the woman, What [is] this [that] thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

“The serpent beguiled me”:

The woman’s desperate effort to pass the blame to the serpent, which was partially true (1 Tim. 2:14), did not absolve her of the responsibility for her distrust and disobedience toward God.

Eve was “beguiled” (as 1 Timothy 2:14 confirms; 2 Cor. 11:3).

But she did not take responsibility for eating, either.

Blame-shifting is another evasive tactic employed by fallen man.

Now that it is too late, the woman realized the serpent had tricked her.

She too, did not want to take the blame and tried to push her guilt to the serpent.

The difference between her and the man was that she was tricked; the man sinned with full knowledge.

There was a certain comedian, as part of his act, would say the devil made me do it.

Excuses never change.

We still try to look for a scapegoat, someone else to take the blame for our sins.

It just won't work.

Each person is responsible for his or her own acts.

We will see in the following verses that, just as sin is individual and each responsible for his own, so is the punishment for sin.

Genesis 3:14 "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:"

“Unto the serpent”:

The cattle and all the rest of creation were cursed (see Rom. 8:20-23; Jer. 12:4), as a result of Adam and Eve’s eating.

But the serpent was uniquely cursed by being made to slither on its belly.

It probably had legs before this curse.

Now snakes represent all that is odious, disgusting, and low.

They are branded with infamy and avoided with fear (Isa. 65:25; Mica 7:17).

(Jeremiah 12:4 and Romans 8:20), indicate that the whole animal kingdom was affected by the Fall and the Edenic curse.

The serpent’s mobilization may have been changed, and figuratively he was to eat “dust,” (idiomatic for subservience), which conveys the idea of being cursed.

Isaiah 65:25 indicates the effects will remain in the Millennium.

You see, God did not give the serpent a chance to explain.

The serpent, the spirit of Lucifer, had already fallen and been cursed.

There was an additional curse pronounced here.

(Many believe the serpent went upright before this curse was pronounced).

He would now crawl on his belly and eat dirt all the days of his life, (lower than all the others in the animal kingdom).

Satan as well as the serpent, was to be bound earthly.

Genesis 3:15 "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."

After cursing the physical serpent, God turned to the spiritual serpent, the lying seducer, Satan and cursed him.

“Shall bruise thy head ... shall bruise his heel”:

This “first gospel” is prophetic of the struggle and its outcome between “your seed” (Satan and unbelievers, who are called the Devil’s children in John 8:44), and her seed (Christ, a descendant of Eve, and those in Him), which began in the garden.

In the midst of the curse passage, a message of hope shone forth, the woman’s offspring “seed” called “it”, is Christ, who will one day defeat the Serpent.

Satan could only “bruise” Christ’s heel (cause Him to suffer), while Christ will bruise Satan’s head (destroy him with a fatal blow).

“It” [or He,] “shall bruise” [literally “crush”] “thy head, but thou shalt bruise his heel” refers to Christ’s bruising on the cross, which led to the eventual crushing of Satan and his kingdom.

Paul, in a passage strongly reminiscent of Genesis 3, encouraged the believers in Rome, “And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Rom. 16:20).

Believers should recognize that they participate in the crushing of Satan because, along with their Savior and because of His finished work on the cross, they also are of the woman’s seed.

For more on the destruction of Satan (see Heb. 2:14-15; Rev. 20:10).

This verse has long been recognized as the first messianic prophecy of the Bible.

Thus, it also contains the first glimpse of the gospel (protoevangelium).

It reveals three essential truths:

- (1) That Satan is the enemy of the human race, explaining why God put “enmity” [related to the word enemy] “between thee” [Satan] and “the woman”;
- (2) That He would place a spiritual barrier between “thy seed” (Satan’s people), and “her seed” (God’s people); and
- (3) That the representative seed of the woman (i.e., a human being: Christ), would deliver the deathblow to Satan, but in so doing would be bruised Himself.

Adamic Covenant:

The dispensation of conscience was based on Adam’s limited experience with good and evil.

He should have remembered the positive results of obedience and then the disastrous consequences of disobedience.

The Adamic covenant was introduced at the beginning of this period.

Under the covenant, the serpent was cursed (verse 14); God promised redemption through the seed of the woman (verse 15); the woman experienced multiplied sorrow and pain in childbearing (verse 16); the earth was cursed (verses 17-18); sorrow, pain, and physical death became part of the experience of life, and labor became burdensome (verse 19).

Man failed under this covenant, degenerating to the point where people did only evil continually (6:5), until God judged them with the Flood (9:12).

This is one of the most important verses in the Bible.

This is the promise of Jesus Christ as destroyer of the devil.

The very first verse said that the serpent, or Satan, would be the natural enemy of mankind.

This statement truly means Satan is indeed our enemy, but also that the snake is the natural enemy as well.

The statement, "between thy seed and her seed" indicated that the enemy of Satan (Jesus), will be of the woman and not of the man.

The devil, Satan, or his demons truly do nip at the heels of the Christian, but through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can stomp on his head.

Genesis Chapter 3 Questions

1. How did the serpent approach Eve?
2. Is there a Scripture where God told Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge?
3. Did Eve know not to eat of the tree?
4. What is a common statement called of people who deal trickery or underhanded?
5. What clever way do people get us to doubt our belief in God or our church today?
6. What statement did Eve add to thou shalt not eat?
7. What was Eve's first mistake?
8. What word describes the tactics of Satan?
9. In verse 4 what lie did the serpent tell Eve?
10. The devil is a liar and God is what?

11. What did the serpent say she would be like when she ate of the tree?
12. Why was Lucifer thrown out of heaven?
13. What two things does the flesh desire?
14. What are many false teachers telling the people today?
15. What is secular humanism teaching our children?
16. What 3 things caused Eve to sin?
17. Who did Eve include in her sin?
18. Did Adam have a choice?
19. Why did they sew fig leaves?
20. What part of what the serpent said was true?
21. Where did they hide?
22. When was the first time specifically mentioned that Eve heard God's voice?
23. Where can you hide from God?
24. What 2 things separated Adam from God?
25. Who was Adam trying to blame?
26. Who did Eve blame?
27. Why did God not let the serpent explain?
28. What was the serpent's position in regard to other animals now?
29. Why is chapter 3 verse 15 so important?
30. Who will be the enemy of the serpent?
31. What indicates the virgin birth of Jesus?