

Genesis 3 1-6

We now come to Genesis chapter three, the description of man's fall and the consequences of that decision. The chapter can be outlined as follows,

1. The Temptation, vs 1-5.
2. The Fall, vs 6.
3. Spiritual Death, vs 7-8.
4. The Divine Confrontation, vs 9-13.
5. The Adamic Covenant, vs 14-19
6. The Results of the Fall, 20-24.

The Temptation, vs 1-5.

Vs 1a, *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.*

In verse 1a we are introduced to the tempter of Eve which is *the serpent*. The serpent is both a literal serpent and Satan. Satan indwelt the serpent in order to talk with Eve. The fact that Satan and the Serpent were one is confirmed in three NT verses,

1. Rev 12:9, *The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.*
2. Rev 20:2, *He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.*
3. 2 Cor 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.*

The word *crafty*, means subtle, shrewd, cunning, or prudent. So, the serpent was more subtle and shrewd than all the other *wild animals* God had made. There are two thoughts as to why this was so. The first is that craftiness was an intrinsic attribute of the snake. It is implied within the verse that God gave varying levels of intelligence to the wild animals and the serpent was thus endowed with subtlety and craftiness. This is a fascinating fact. How all the animals interacted before the fall, is a mystery. For the serpent, to have this craftiness was neither a good nor a bad thing. Rather the question was how it was to be used, and Satan used the intrinsic God given ability of its cunning, shrewdness, and craftiness, and directed it against Eve. The second line of thought is the serpent had these attributes because Satan indwelt it and made it so. But this also raises the question as to how Satan indwelt the serpent and took control of it in the first place, but these answers are not given. Which view is correct? It is difficult to tell, but the end result is the same for each theory; Satan used the snake to tempt the woman.

Vs 1b, *He said to the woman,*

As we approach this verse, the first question we should ask is why did Satan go to Eve? Why didn't Satan approach Adam? The best answer is revealed in 1 P 3:7, where Peter says that husbands are to treat their wives with respect as the weaker, but equal partner. Now this section of 1 P gets a lot of bad press from the feminist movement, but let me explain. Biologically, as a general rule, women are physically weaker than men. They are also emotionally different than men. Women are usually more

compassionate, more tender, more sensitive, and more nurturing than men. Women are not designed to be the warrior, the fighter, the protector, the defender, or guardian. That is more natural to a man's temperament. This is why historically, culturally, and socially, men are seen to be the protector while women are to be protected. Here is a test question to prove to you why this is so. If you as a man or woman had the choice of walking at night through Watts in LA, or parts of the Bronx in NYC, or the south side of Chicago, would you rather go with another woman or a man? I bet most of you would choose a man. This is not sexist, it is a biological reality. Hence, as a general rule, women are more vulnerable, physically, and emotionally than men. This is not to say women cannot protect themselves, or are all emotionally unstable. Rather it is to say, men are more wired to fight, guard, protect, and be emotionally detached, while women are wired to nurture, support, care, and be emotionally involved. Why the difference? Because you need both to balance each other in the formation of family.

So Satan seeks out Eve, who at this point, is out of the protective reach of her husband. Not until verse 6 does Adam become involved. The implication is Eve is alone. Satan will therefore use her vulnerability to his advantage. 2 Cor 11:14 says Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and so, as Satan targets Eve, he will appear approachable, trustworthy, and most importantly, that he has her best interest and wellbeing at heart. Jn 8:44 says Satan is the father of lies, and his lies always pertain to either the character of God, or the Word of God. So, note Satan's tactics; he must gain her attention and trust, then he must sow doubt about either the Word of God and or God's character, then convince her to believe his lie about either.

Vs 1b, *Did God really say?*

The first thing to note regarding verse 1 is Satan uses the word Elohim for God which is a generic term for God. In Gen 1 and 2 the name for God is YHWH, his personal name that implies his sovereignty and rule. Satan cannot stomach that name so uses the generic name for God, because he does not want to acknowledge God's sovereignty. This is why most translations have *God* and not *Lord God*.

Satan then begins his attack by trying to create doubt in Eve's mind regarding God's Word. We read, *Did God really say?* This is the first question in the Bible and it is designed to sow doubt in the woman's mind as to the veracity of God's Word. We face this same question in our own lives. We come upon any number of decisions where we can hear this little voice in our head saying, *did God really say* this thought was wrong, or that word we want to speak is not helpful, or the decision we are about to make is ungodly? Did God really say that? Satan tried to foment doubt in the woman's mind, just has he now tries to throw doubt in yours. Did God really say he loves you? Did God really say he cares about you? Did God really say He forgives you? Did God really say He will supply all your needs? Did God really say He will answer your prayers? Did God really promise peace in times of trouble? Does God really have your best interest in mind? Satan tries to get you to question, to doubt, and then not believe. This is the first tactical approach Satan will take.

Va 1c, *'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'*

Note too, the question itself is twisted. Satan takes God's command which was you can eat of any tree, just not the tree of good and evil. Yet Satan frames the question as, *Did God really say, you must not eat*

from any tree in the garden? MacArthur has a great commentary on this verse that I shall quote, “the way to translate that statement could be, “So, God has said as He, you shall not eat from any tree of the garden” – or you shall not eat from every tree of the garden. So, Eve, I guess God says you can’t eat everything in the garden. Listen to this. For the first time, the most deadly spiritual force ever released was by that question released into the world, and it is this deadly force: the assumption that what God said is subject to our judgment. That’s the issue. That’s what launches this entire attack. Hey, Eve, let’s talk about what God said and how we feel about it. Really? Here is the deadliest force that has ever been released in the world, and it’s covertly smuggled into the world by means of Satan using a reptile as an instrument. The assumption is that what God says is subject to our judgment, our evaluation, our assessment. Now listen. All temptation, all temptation – I mean that. All temptation starts with the idea that we have a right to evaluate what God has said or required. It is subject to human judgment.”

Vs 2a, The woman said to the serpent,

The woman now responds. Note there is no mention of wonder or surprise that she is talking with a serpent. I think this is where C.S. Lewis got his idea of talking animals for his Narnia series. One wonders if before the fall, all the animals could talk.

Vs 2b, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

In verse 2b which continues into verse 3, the woman tells Satan what God had said. Now note the original command had been given to Adam and not the woman (Gen 2:17). So, we must infer Adam had relayed this information to her.

Vs 3, but 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.’”

Note in Gen 2:16-17 there was no prohibition on touching the fruit, just eating it (*and the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die*). Perhaps, Adam had told her that you should not touch it either. In any event the woman understood she was neither to touch it or eat it. Remember, the tree of life and the tree of good and evil are right next to one another. She ate from one, and saw the other tree every day.

Vs 4, You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.

Now we have Satan’s second tactical approach to the woman. In the first, he tried to create doubt. Now Satan explicitly denies God’s truth. In the first approach Satan says, did God really say? And now Satan says, God said it, but He did not mean it. This is Satan’s first recorded lie in scripture.

Now there is nothing in Genesis 1 or 2 to indicate that Adam and the woman had any idea of what death meant. They were told in 2:17 they would die if they ate of the tree. But what reference did they have to know what this meant? I do not see that they had a reference. They only knew that if they ate, they would experience some abstract thing called death. So, here is the critical point, obeying the command was more important than understanding the consequences. It is like telling our kids the stove is hot, even though they may not know what hot is.

Satan's line of attack is to now deny the consequence that God had told them of. In our hot stove analogy, it is if someone came to the child and said, you will not get burned if you touch that hot stove.

Vs 5, For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Note the appeal in verse 5. Satan tells the woman that God is withholding something from her that she deserves to know. Satan is now attacking God's character. God cannot have your best interest in mind if He is going to willfully retain some essential information from you. God therefore must be jealous and protective of such knowledge because he (God) is not willing to share. I quote from MacArthur again, "First he (Satan) introduced the fact that God was subject to judgment. God's Word was subject to a discussion and an evaluation and a verdict could be rendered on what God said. He moves from that seemingly innocent approach – let's have a discussion about God – to planting the idea that God cannot be trusted. God is cruel. God is uncaring. God is needlessly narrow. God is putting you into bondage, and the real fun stuff is outside of His confinement. And she has fallen into distrusting God and to questioning – listen to this – God's character. The sin of all sins. And as Martin Luther said, "Satan knows now that the wall has begun to topple." So Luther said, "Satan started pushing against it so that it could completely crush Eve."

Satan says, when she eats, she will be *like God*. in Satan's view, to be like God means she will know good and evil. Eve already knew good, but she did not know evil. He was flattering her intellectual capacity (i.e. she was just as capable as God in understanding such things) and fanning a desire in her to know something God knew (which she didn't) and which God was withholding from her.

In Is 14:12-14 we are given a glimpse of Satan's heart and the five I will's that accounted for his fall. The last was his will to *be like God*. This desire made Satan fall and it is the same appeal he now gives to the woman to make her fall.

So, in summary what does Satan do,

1. He initially gains the woman's trust,
2. then he causes the woman to doubt God's Word.
3. He then denies God's Word.
4. And in so doing, he attributes to God motives and actions that he implies are opposed to the woman's best interests. In other words, Satan impugns God's character.

The Fall, vs 6

Vs 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.

Verse 6 records the fall of the woman and of Adam. We should note five things regarding the verse,

1. The woman's temptation followed the pattern outlined in 1 Jn 2:16, (from the NLT) *for the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our*

achievements and possessions. The woman saw the fruit of the tree was good for food (the craving for physical pleasure), and pleasing to the eye (a craving for everything we see), and also desirable for gaining wisdom (pride in achievements and possessions—i.e. she would know something no one else would know=pride). The Hebrew word for desire is nechmad and comes from the same root as covet. Eating, she felt, would give her something she felt she did not possess. I have mentioned Rene Girard many times before. His insight was that we are all imitative creatures and we model our desire after others. In other words, we desire because we either consciously or subconsciously model ourselves after the desire of another. I want it because you want it. In this terrible incident, the woman modeled her desire after Satan's which was to be like God.

2. After being tempted, the woman proceeded to sin. It was not a sin to take and touch the fruit. It was a sin to eat it. This event follows the sin equation given in James 1:13-15 (from the NIV), *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.* In short, temptation + thought (or consideration) + time = birth, then action, then death (3T=BAD).
3. Adam then fell. Note the verse says Adam was right there with the woman. He was not away working the garden or naming more animals. He was not out and came home for dinner where she seduced him and fed him the fruit. No, he was right there. We are not told when he came upon the scene, but he knew what had happened and now Eve becomes to Adam what the serpent was to Eve. She modeled his desire and he eats. He did not stop her.
4. The Bible makes a clear distinction between the woman's sin and the man's. She was deceived but Adam went into it full stop. I Tim 2:14, *And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.* So scripture makes clear, Eve was deceived, but Adam was not, he ate objectively and willfully. We saw from Gen 2:21 that the woman was created from the man and Adam subsequently named her. This introduced the idea of headship and authority. He was given authority over her because he named her. Scripture says the woman is under the headship of the man. This is a large subject in and of itself, and one that we should discuss and develop at some point, however the important thing to note is though Eve sinned first, God holds Adam as the primary person responsible for the act, for he is the head of the woman. Rms 5:12, *when Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.* 1 Cor 15:22, *just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.* It is not in Eve that we all die, it is in Adam. And why is that? Because God considers Adam as the head of the human race and we are all genetically derived from him. We are all his offspring and that sin DNA gets passed to everyone who descends from him (which is all of us).
5. This marks the breakage of the Edenic Covenant which was given in 1:28-30 and 2:24-25. Note Hos 6:7, *But like Adam, ^[a] you broke my covenant and betrayed my trust.*

Next time we will see the consequences of their sin and what happens to them.

