

Responsive Reading

Genesis 3:1-7 NKJV

¹ 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.

WHAT IN THE WORLD HAPPENED?

The Devil Made Me Do It! Genesis 3:1-7

Open:

- Genesis 3 is one of the most important chapters in all the Bible.
 - It is foundational and sets the scene for the rest of the Bible.
 - It’s like a movie, miss the opening scene and you’re guessing what is going on for the rest of the movie.

- This chapter explains why the world has so many problems, what went wrong, why do we need a savior and what has God been up to?
 - We move from Paradise to a problem, and we are only 3 chapters in.
 - Contrary to the evolutionist ... man is not on his way up (claiming he has developed from simplicity to complexity) ... he was created perfect but suffered a devastating fall from which he has never fully recovered.
- √ Like a plane whose engine has stalled, morally and spiritually he is in a downward spiral.
- Unless we come to terms with what happened in the Garden, we will not find our way back to God.

➤ We move from **Genesis 1:31** where everything was pronounced **very good ...** to **Genesis 3** where we see things begin to unravel.

- We see the irresistible pull of sin ...

- √ By the time we reach **Chapter 4** we have recorded the first murder (**Vs. 8**) mention of polygamy (**Vs. 19**) another killing (**Vs. 23**) ...

- √ Until you arrive in **Chapter 6** where things have reached critical status:

Genesis 6:5 NKJV Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

➤ How did we get in this shape? **Genesis 3** provides the answer to that question.

(1) **Satan: Genesis 3:1a NKJV** Now the serpent was more cunning (deceitful, shrewd) than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.

- The fact that there is a talking snake does not make this fiction.

- √ Other Scriptures look back to this passage not as a fable but an event that occurred. (**Romans 5:12-19; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; Revelation 12:9**).

- √ As for the talking snake: we are not to assume that God created reptiles with the ability to talk and reason.
 - This was abnormal, unusual.
 - As to whether Satan possessed the serpent (entered into) or took on the form of a serpent (he is the master of disguises ... perhaps masquerading as an animal ... **2 Corinthians 11:14** says he is able to transform himself into “an angel of light”).
- What is important to note is Satan, man’s adversary, is behind it all. His name literally means: one who accuses, brings an accusation ... he is out to discredit you.
- What we know from other Scripture is sin did not begin on earth (the Garden) but in Heaven.
- √ 3 chapters in ... we meet the serpent; 3 chapters in from the end of the Bible, he is seen the last time.
 - The results of his work are seen on every page in between.
- Where did he come from? When did he fall? Surely God did not create evil ... did He?
 - √ In brevity: he appears suddenly and unexpectedly.
 - √ Since everything was **very good** in **Genesis 1:31** ... somewhere between the end of creation and the events in chapter 3 ... this angel fell.
 - √ We speculate it must have been soon after creation because Adam and Eve had not given birth to any children yet.
 - √ To learn more of this angel whose beginning is in Heaven and not earth ... we have to go elsewhere.
 - √ Putting the pieces of the puzzle together, we learn:
- **Ezekiel 28** these words are spoken to an earthly king but closer examination reveals they describe the actions of another “being” who had his beginning in Heaven.
- √ You may want to spend some time in **Vs. 11-19** later.

- ✓ **Vs. 13 NLT** You were in Eden, the Garden of God ...
- ✓ **Vs. 14 NLT** I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God ...
- ✓ **Vs. 15 NLT** You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you.
- ✓ Scripture indicates this to be a high-ranking angel. He was assigned the role of heavenly worship at God's throne.
- ✓ Though created perfect and no fault to the Creator, evil was found in him.

→ Jealousy within over time expresses itself without, on the outside.

- The prophet Isaiah sheds more light on this subject.

Isaiah 14:12-15 NLT ¹² “How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth (demoted), you who destroyed the nations of the world. ¹³ For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. ¹⁴ I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’ ¹⁵ Instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths.

- Lucifer was the angel's name ... means “shining one.”
 - ✓ His assignment was to guard the throne of God.
 - ✓ To see that praise and glory that belong to him alone were given him.
 - ✓ This God-given authority went to his head ... soon he wanted some attention ... he wanted to be worshipped like God.

→ He lost his position because of pride.

- Jesus said of this event: **Luke 10:18 NLT** “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning!”
 - ✓ As quickly as he rose, he fell. He didn't go quietly; he went kicking and screaming.
 - ✓ He is such a smooth talker, **Revelation 12:4** indicates 1 out of 3 angels followed him ... we refer to them as fallen angels or demons.

➤ You might be thinking ... why didn't God just obliterate him, cast him into hell and be done with it?

- ✓ Scripture does not clearly say, so let me speculate ...
- ✓ God allows good and evil to co-exist and in the end, we see good winning. God does have our best interest at heart!
- ✓ God is gracious and even when angels or man disobey, His character is unchanged.
- ✓ Satan fits into God's plan ... He extends grace and mercy to fallen man = salvation.
- ✓ Allowing Satan to continue would in the end bring God greater glory.
- ✓ Whatever the reason ... God knew it would happen and He planned accordingly.

- The redemption plan was in place before creation took place.

1 Peter 1:18-20a NLT ¹⁸ For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. ¹⁹ It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. ²⁰ God chose him as your ransom long before the world began ...

➤ It was said of this enemy ... **he was more cunning** (crafty, clever) **than any beast of the field ...**

- ✓ Wise and slippery was the serpent.
 - ✓ Eve's only hope would have been to cling to the Word of God.
- If only she had listened to God.
 - Instead she tried to reason and think her way through ... victim.

(2) His Strategy

- He targets Eve when she is alone, possibly standing under or near the forbidden tree.

→ Ever notice how temptations come? After a tiring day, after a huge victory (you deserve it), when down or discouraged.

- √ Temptations are not as strong when at church, when you are with fellow believers ... the enemy targets you when you are alone.
- Satan twists and perverts things ... the first question of Scripture: **Vs. 1 Did God really say? Has God indeed said?**
- √ He attacks God's Word and tries to create doubt.
 - How do you know the Bible is the Word of God?
 - Were you there when it was given?
- The enemy still attacks the accuracy of this book.
- √ In his question, he emphasizes the negative ... **Is it true you can't eat fruit from this tree?**
 - See how subtle that is ... Satan directed Eve's gaze to the one tree she was to avoid.
 - You are missing out, God is withholding something from you.
- Satan's strategy was to portray God as narrow, strict, restrictive ... He wants to limit your freedom.
 - Implication: I, the serpent, want you to enjoy it all ... I want you to be happy ...
- Eve knew God was good ... she had no reason to question the character of God.
- √ He had been gracious and generous ... Satan has got her pondering, considering a thought she had never had.
- Suggestive thoughts, questionable ideas fly across our mind ... but when we stop to consider them ... things get murky.
- √ Though innocent ... Eve didn't know this was God's enemy ... the devil doesn't approach us wearing a name badge ... she should have gone for help ... instead she handles this alone.

- √ Actually, Eve says: **We can eat of the different trees of the garden ... just not this one.**
- √ She is holding her ground ... way to go Eve!

– He moves from creating doubt to outright denial.

Vs. 4 You are not going to die.

- √ He contradicts the Word of God ... God is lying.
- √ She is faced with a decision ... who should she believe?

→ In salvation God brings the soul back to that very point of departure and insists on belief as essential to salvation.

Acts 16:31 NKJV Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

* But why would God say this? Here is the delusion: Satan pretends to offer to Eve what he could not obtain ...

You will be like God!

- √ God has no equals. Satan knew God tolerates no rivals.

Isaiah 42:8 NLT I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else, nor share my praise with carved idols.

- √ The throne has but one seat and it's taken.

* He gets you doubting, starts denying until you become delusional.

(3) The Sin – Vs. 6

- Temptations will strengthen us or weaken us, but we will not remain neutral, aloof ...
- Eve took the bait ... swallowed it hook, line and sinker.

- √ The angels in heaven must have gasped.
- √ The creature made in the image of God, loved by God, provided for by God ... dare thumb their nose at God.
- √ Eve ... what are you thinking?

➤ It happens still today:

James 1:13-15 NLT ¹³ And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. ¹⁴ Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. ¹⁵ These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

- First you think it and then you do it ... win the “mind battle” and you win the war.

➤ The sinner becomes the seducer ... Adam suddenly appears.

- √ Satan doesn't tempt Adam; he lets Eve do that.
- √ Eve was deceived; Adam sinned with his eyes wide open.
- √ As head of the human race, he bore the ultimate responsibility for the fall.
- √ Because of their actions, the entire human race was plunged into sin.

Romans 5:12 NLT When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

- √ God would have to become a man and die to undo what man did.

* Our passage ends with:

(4) Shame – Vs. 7

- Man's fellowship with God was broken.
- His innocence ruined ...
- √ Concerning knowing good and evil ... it was a trick.

- √ Illust.: A healthy oncologist “knows” cancer ... with expertise and objectivity he knows how to spot it and treat it. The patient dying of cancer “knows” it as well ... but in a way that is destructive.
 - Adam and Eve had a knowledge of evil like that of a cancer patient.
 - This is not the enlightenment that Satan led Eve to believe she would obtain.
 - She and Adam did not become like God ... quite the opposite.
- They felt exposed. Guilt and shame filled their heart.
- √ It is likely they were covered in light as a garment ... such is the covering of God.

Psalms 104:2a NLT You are dressed in a robe of light.

- √ The moment they sinned the light went out.
- √ The death of their spirit caused the light to be extinguished.
- √ Sensing their nakedness, they cover themselves with fig leaves. (This represents man’s first attempt to cover his sin.)
- √ Our future studies will reveal the only adequate covering for sin.

Close: Before the fall the voice of God in the Garden had been their joy and delight.

- Their daily quiet time with the Lord was the best part of the day.
 - (1) Satan, jealous and full of pride, arrives.
 - (2) His strategy: doubt, denial and delusion.
 - (3) Sin wrecked the garden ... enticed and dived by the enemy.
 - (4) Until a dark shadow of shame was cast upon Paradise.
- √ Nothing in life would be the same again.
- √ The choices we make will not only shape us but they impact those behind us.

Next Lesson: Genesis 3:8-14 Hiding from God.

Message Notes
Pastor Ralph Schneck
First Baptist Church of Lexington
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