



## FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Genesis 3:1-6

How can people living in a perfect environment so easily give in to temptation? We have to give credit to the great tempter, Satan. His temptation was subtle and its execution flawless. We do well to take note of his devices that are on display in Genesis 3.

We've discovered thus far, in our Wisdom Journey, that God created all that is, including the Garden of Eden—a beautiful, peaceful paradise.

Have you ever wondered why the world *we* exist in is anything but a peaceful paradise? Why didn't we inherit the garden of Eden from Adam and Eve?

The answer is found in Genesis 3, one of the most tragic chapters in human history.

In verse 1 we read, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made." This particular serpent doesn't need any introduction. He just shows up in the garden when Eve is evidently alone.

We're told here that he's "crafty." The Hebrew word means "sly" and "cunning." My friend, you give him the key to your back door, and he'll soon own your house, and you'll be out on the curb.

Now keep in mind this temptation is going to take place when Eve has perfect living conditions: peace with God, a wonderful marriage to Adam, and amazing harmony with the creation that surrounds her. This is Paradise!

Listen, nobody who chooses to sin can claim it's be-

cause they lack some advantage, whether it's a nice house, a good education, the right family, or a positive environment. They can't argue that if life were easier or better, they wouldn't have chosen a life of sin.

Look at Eve! She has *everything* going for her, yet she's going to rebel against her loving Creator, God.

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Creator, God.*

Frankly, none of us is any match for Satan. We're never too big to be deceived. That's why the apostle Paul warns us not to be ignorant of Satan's tempting devices (2 Corinthians 2:11).

So, let's watch and learn as Satan makes five strategic moves in tempting Eve with forbidden fruit.



First, *Satan shows up in a form that disarms Eve.*

He shows up in the Garden, possessing a serpent. Verse 1 uses the ordinary Hebrew word for snake. Just remember, before sin entered the world, there was no need to fear animals. The relationship between animals and humans was harmonious, not dangerous.

And Eve doesn't seem to be surprised by a talking serpent, which implies that before sin entered the world, some animals may have been able to communicate. But Satan is possessing this serpent, and he's in control of the conversation here with Eve.

Second, *he raises doubt in Eve's mind.*

We read in verse 1, “[Satan] said to the woman, ‘Did God actually say, “You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?”’” In other words, “Did God really say that this one little tree is off limits? Isn't that a little strange, Eve? What's wrong with one little tree? Did God literally say that?”

Satan has been casting doubt on God's word ever since.

Eve replies in verse 2:

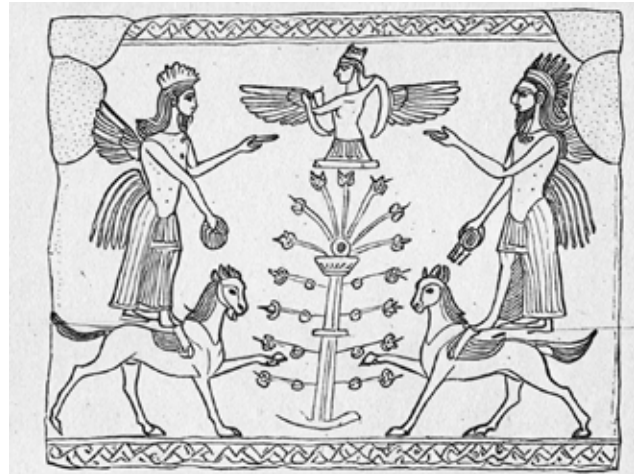
*“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”*

In other words, “Yes, that's what God said!”

By the way, it's not recorded for us that God directly told Eve about this tree. We *do* know God gave Adam this warning in Genesis 2:17, *before* Eve was created. Passing this restriction on to Eve was part of Adam's spiritual leadership, and Eve had heard it from Adam.

And she was evidently a good listener—unlike most husbands—because she basically quotes back to Satan what Adam told her God had said.

Now there are some who say Eve exaggerated God's command and showed disrespect to His word to Adam by adding that they weren't allowed to touch the tree.



This cylinder seal depicts a sun god hovering above a sacred tree

God had not forbidden *touching* the tree.

But I personally believe Adam added that precaution, not to disrespect God's word, but to keep Eve as safe as possible: “Eve, don't eat from it; don't even get near it; don't even touch it.” He loves her and doesn't want to lose her, and he certainly doesn't want her to die.

Satan's strategy of raising doubt in Eve's mind about God's word doesn't work.

So, Satan follows that up with a third strategic move; *now he outright denies any danger to Eve.*

In verse 4, Satan says, “You will not surely die.” In other words, “What do you mean, you're going to die? Do you really think after all the trouble God went through to create you, He's going to get rid of you? You're not going to die.”

And if he can, the serpent is smiling with a reassuring smile.

God said back in Genesis 2:17 eat from it, and *you shall surely die*. Satan says in chapter 3 verse 4 eat of it, and *you will not surely die*.

And in case you're wondering, God always tells the truth and Satan never does. He's the Father of lies (John 8:44).

But again, Eve stands her ground and doesn't reach for the fruit.

So, Satan takes a fourth strategic step in this temptation—and this one works. *He accuses God of being unfair to Eve.*



In verse 5, Satan says, “*God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened.*”

“Oh, listen, Eve, God’s being selfish; He’s not playing fair; He’s not as good to you as He could be. He’s holding back.”

How many have listened to that temptation? The tempter might be whispering in your mind these days that God is keeping something good from you; He’s not playing fair; He would do more for you if He really cared about you.

Those are all lies, straight out of the garden of Eden.

Satan moves quickly to take his fifth and final step in deceiving Eve; *he promises her that sin will bring fulfillment.*

He tells her in verse 5, “You will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

What’s his appeal? “You’ll be right up there with God, just as wise and discerning as He is. You’ll be able to distinguish between good and evil; you’ll know everything God knows; you’ll be independent and free to think and act on your own.”

At this point, Eve steps forward to take a closer look. The Bible sadly records what happens:

*When the woman saw that the tree was good for food* [this was the physical lure], *and that it was a delight to the eyes* [this was the emotional lure], *and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise* [that was the intellectual lure], *she took of its fruit and ate.* (verse 6)

Did she become like God? No, she became like Satan, who himself had tried to become like God earlier.

And then she turns to her husband, who evidently just showed up, and *she* becomes the tempter, in essence saying, “Adam, eat this.” In other words, let’s be independent of God together.

The Bible records in verse 6, “She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”

And the sound of them chewing on that fruit has echoed all the way down through human history to this very moment.

Let’s do what we want to do with our own lives. If it looks good, if it feels good, if it looks satisfying, let’s eat our fill of sin whenever we want. Let’s act independently of God and His Word and His warning.

And the result? Adam and Eve will soon learn they’ve lost their special communion with God, they’ve lost their innocence, and they’ve even lost their unity in marriage.

Did they become as wise as God? No. Were they immediately and completely fulfilled? No. Now they were empty.

They gained nothing by sin, and neither do we.

Because of the impact of that original sin, we will never be able to enjoy what Adam and Eve lost—not now, not ever—unless something happens. And that something will happen, as we will see as our Wisdom Journey continues.

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How can you better equip yourself to resist temptation? Particularly, how should you deal with doubts Satan tries to raise?

Do you ever find yourself assuming you are safe from Satan’s attacks? What attitude should you take?

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