# "The First Temptation"

**Genesis 3:1-7**
11/2/97

Introduction:

*** Lest we fall into Satan's temptations, <u>WE MUST BE AWARE OF HIS DEVICES</u>!**
(*"We are not ignorant of His devices"* - 2 Cor.2:11)

**I. Satan DISGUISES his true identity**
("the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field")

**II. Satan DIRECTS HIS ATTACK at the most favorable line of resistance**
("And he said unto the woman")

**III. Satan raises DOUBT as to what God really said**
("Yea, hath God said")

**IV. Satan DISTORTS the truth about what God said**
("Ye shall not eat of <u>every</u> tree of the garden?")

**V. Satan DISTRACTS our attention from God's provision to God's prohibition**
("Ye shall not eat of every <u>tree</u> of the garden?")

**VI. Satan DENYS the consequences for yielding to temptation**
("Ye shall not surely die")

**VII. Satan provokes DISTRUST in the goodness of God**
("For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then…")

**VIII. Satan dangles DESIRE in front of our eyes**
("your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good & evil")

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Introduction:

Adam's condition before the Fall:

**MAN'S ORIGINAL STATE**

1. God originally created man in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27)

   This "image" was a:
   a. Spiritual likeness to God (man is a spirit who has a body)
   b. Moral likeness to God (man was totally pure and free from sin)
   c. Personal likeness to God (man had an intellect, emotion, and will that functioned perfectly)

2. God pronounced all of creation (including man) "very good" on the sixth day of creation (Gen. 1:31).
   a. Adam had no proneness toward sin because he had no sin nature.
   b. Adam was in a state of unconfirmed holiness.
      1) Since holiness is a fundamental attribute of God, and since man was created in God's image, man also was fundamentally holy.
      "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Pet. 1:16).

      2) Man's original holiness was not just "innocence" (as if man were a neutral blank page. Man had a Godward moral quality; he was not neutral).

      3) Man's original holiness included right tendencies, direction, character, and moral ability.
      Adam had a bent toward God; a positive Godward tendency, etc., but was not yet confirmed (eternally settled, sealed, solidified or "clinched") in holiness.

   3. God adequately provided everything Adam could ever want or need.
      Spiritually - God communed with Adam (Gen. 1:29).
      Physically - Adam had an abundance of provision (Gen. 1:29-30).
      Socially - Eve was created for Adam (Gen. 2:18-25).

Some basic observations about the test of Adam (2:16-17) -

1. The necessity of the test

   a. This test was necessary to the purposes of God (God, for His own glory and will, established this test).

b. This test was necessary to give Adam and Eve the chance to objectively and willingly obey God.

This moral test from God's perspective was not a solicitation to disobey, but an opportunity to obey.

c. The test was necessary to confirm Adam in holiness if he obeyed.

God did not create Adam as a robot, but gave him a free will with which to choose God's will.

2. The reality of the test

a. Erroneous views of the test

1) The mythological view - They say the test was an ancient legend or myth, made up by man and passed down by tradition (liberal and neo-orthodox theologians).

2) The allegorical view - They say the test was an allegory (like a parable). A divinely conceived account (not an actual account) to convey a real truth (the corruption of man by sin).

b. The literal view of the test

A literal interpretation of the Scriptural account reveals a real Adam, a real tree with real fruit, a real serpent and a real temptation.

Proofs:

1) There is no suggestion in Scripture that this test was not literal.

2) All of the details in Genesis 2 & 3 are specific (a feature not true of an allegory or parable)
[EX: names of individuals, geographical locations, etc.]

3) The parallel drawn between the "first Adam" and the "last Adam" proves a literal account.
   a) Romans 5:12-19
   b) I Cor. 15:20-22 - If Adam were a myth, then Christ would also be a myth.

3. The time of the test

a. The Bible does not state how much time elapsed between the creation of Adam and Eve on Day 6 and the fall into sin.

b. However sin existed before the conception of their first-born son Cain (who had a sin nature) (Gen.4:1).

The best guess is that Adam and Eve sinned relatively early after creation (before she had conceived any children - Gen. 3:16).

4. The character of the test

   a. Adam had ample provision to meet all of his needs (Gen. 2:16).

   b. God's command was clear, uncomplicated, and specific (Gen. 2:17; 3:11).

   c. The tree was a normal tree.

      There is no suggestion whatever that the tree was different
      (other than its location - Gen. 2:9) from any other tree in the garden.

      A temptation would not come from the tree's uniqueness nor from any special properties in the juice of the fruit.

What is temptation?

***"Temptation" -*** ( N.T. - *peirasmos)* - A solicitation to do evil; a suggestion to violate what you know to be right; an allurement to act against your conscience.

SEE: James 1:13ff

ILLUS: The bait and the fish

Being tempted is not sin; yielding to it is (Ja. 1:15).

*** Lest we fall into Satan's temptations, <u>WE MUST BE AWARE OF HIS DEVICES</u>!**
(*"We are not ignorant of His devices"* - 2 Cor.2:11)

**I. Satan DISGUISES his true identity**
("the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field")

**v. 1**

The word "serpent" (*nachash*) originally meant to "hiss," perhaps referring to the enchanting sound the serpent made (the word enchantment is a related term to serpent).

The "serpent" was a literal animal as evident by its description as being a **"beast of the field."** (v. 1) And the creature was cursed to crawl (3:14).

The serpent was controlled (utilized) by Satan on this occasion so that he might have a means by which to speak to Eve.

This serpent did not crawl yet (since crawling was a curse imposed on the serpent after the Fall - Gen. 3:14). Rather, this creature stood upright and perhaps had legs, as a lizard.

It was not a mere serpent that tempted Eve. Actually, it was Satan (the devil; fallen Lucifer) who spoke through that creature.

Satan, a spirit being without a physical, visible body, utilized the serpent's body to tempt. Supernatural beings can cause animals to speak (EX: Balaam's donkey).

The serpent's speaking to Eve probably took her by surprise, but he craftily engaged in deep conversation before she had time to think (Ross, p. 134).

Proofs that Satan was the real tempter behind the serpent:

1. Satan is specifically called "that old (ancient) serpent" (Rev. 12:9, 20:2)

2. Satan is called the originator of sin from the beginning (I Jn. 3:8).

3. Satan is called the "Father" of lies and a "murderer" "from the beginning" (Jn. 8:44)

4. Satan is alluded to by Paul as a snake which would be stepped on (Rom. 16:20 - And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.)

**"Subtil" -** *arum* - meaning to be clever, intelligent, or brilliant (the word does not always have a negative connotation). *Arum* is primarily translated "prudent" (Prov. 12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8, 15, 18; 22:3; 27:12).

Jesus perhaps had the serpent's original intelligence in mind when He said, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Mt. 10:16).

Satan used the best suited creature for his purpose. The most attractive and intelligent creature outside of man.

By using the serpent, Satan hid his true identity. Even today, he can speak through the mouth of the most religious of people (EX: Peter - Mt. 16:32) and can appear as an angel of light (I Cor. 11:14). So "seeing" something is not necessarily worth believing it.

## II. Satan DIRECTS HIS ATTACK at the most favorable line of resistance

("And he said unto the woman")

**v. 1**

**"He said unto the woman" -** Eve, at this time, may have been totally unaware of a serpent's inability to speak.

Satan deliberately bypasses Adam, who was more familiar with the nature and characteristics of the serpent (since he named the animals - 2:19-20).

Why did Satan tempt Eve instead of Adam?

1. Adam (not Eve) was directly prohibited by God from eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (2:16-17).

2. Eve may have had personality differences (EX: more emotional) that made her a better target (I Tim. 2:14).

3. In the event of success with Eve, Satan would have a more subtle approach to Adam (he went to the line of least resistance first).

Satan uses the serpent to get Eve, and then Eve to get Adam.

Satan would use the serpent (a subordinate to Eve [she had dominion over the serpent]) and then would use Eve (a subordinate to Adam [who was the head of the home by creation order - I Cor. 11:1ff]).

Satan will always seek the weakest line of resistance. If he is unsuccessful in getting you directly, he will seek to get you by getting first your spouse or your children, etc.

## III. Satan raises DOUBT as to what God really said

("Yea, hath God said")

God's authoritative Word which had spoken creation into existence now becomes the main focus of Satan's attack.

**v. 1**

**"Yea" -** "indeed"; Satan does not begin with a bold negative, but with a positive word.

So as to soften his approach, the devil is most often gentle at first. He is not like the dentist who rudely jams the anesthetic needle into your gums; but rather, he coaxes it in ever so smoothly.

**"Hath God said" -** Satan's most basic attack is aimed at questioning God's Word.

So as to raise doubt, Satan asks Eve a true or false question. The problem, however, is that he asks it in such a way that a simple yes or not answer will not suffice. Some further explanation would be necessary.

Satan's primary goal today is to attack the Bible; to question its authorship, authenticity, and authority. To lead people to mistrust it; not take it seriously; not read it nor heed it.

## IV. Satan DISTORTS the truth about what God said

("Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?")

**v. 1**

**"Hath God said, ye shall not eat of <u>every tree</u> of the garden?"** - Rather than focusing on the <u>one</u> restriction (and asking the question this way: "Hath God said, ye shall not eat of <u>one tree</u> of the garden?"), Satan broadens the restriction to make it seem worse than it really was.

Satan's words are carefully disguised to suggest to Eve that God was too restrictive.

Satan always makes God's prohibitions seem to be some big, ugly, monster. He often suggests that God is unreasonable, His Word absurd.

Satan's strategy is to <u>exaggerate</u> the <u>truth</u> so as to question what the truth really is.

He presents an <u>extreme</u> example so as to suggest that no part of the example is valid.

Examples:

--If you really follow Christ, you will miss out on <u>all</u> the fun in life.

--If you don't want to be a <u>child abuser</u>, don't spank your kids.

--If you don't want to be a <u>slave</u>, don't listen to that "wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands" stuff.

When Satan speaks, he mixes truth with error (fact with lies) –

**"Ye shall not surely die"** (v. 4) = False

**"Then your eyes shall be opened"** (v. 5) = True

**"And ye shall be as God"** (v. 5) = False

**"Knowing good and evil"** (v. 5) = True

## V. Satan DISTRACTS our attention from God's provision to God's prohibition

("Ye shall not eat of every <u>tree</u> of the garden?")

**v. 1**

Satan's goal in asking this question in this way was to cause Eve's attention to focus on the prohibition. He intentionally diverts her attention away from all she could eat to the one tree she could not eat.

Satan does this today. He seeks to distract us from seeing all of the blessings we do have and provoke us to be preoccupied with the few things we don't have.

**v. 2**

**"And the woman said to the serpent" -** Satan succeeded in getting the woman to dialogue with him. He got her to hang around and "think" about it.

She should have left the scene at Satan's first suggestion that God was too restrictive.

If you spend your time flirting with temptation, eventually you will give in (Rom. 13:14 - But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.)

The blessed man does not spend time associating with the wicked (Ps. 1:1).

**v. 3**

**"Ye shall not eat of it" -** The "ye" is plural, implying that Eve knew that the command given to Adam (2:17) applied to her as well.

**"Neither shall ye touch it" -** Here, Eve adds to God's one restriction. God said, "Thou shalt not eat of it." It is not recorded that He said anything about not touching it.

Eve unduly emphasized and distorted the lone restriction.

Perhaps either Adam or Eve, so as to avoid the possibility of eating the fruit, agree to not even touch it.

Their addition to God's Word, however, set them up for the Fall. Because nothing happened to Eve when she touched the fruit, she thought nothing would happen if she ate it.

Beware of legalism which legislates man-made rules and traditions as equal to God's Word. Legalism elevates man's opinions about God's Word, or applications of God's Word, as being equal to God's Word. The end result will be a nullification of God's Word in an effort to keep up with all the details that have been added on to

it (Mt. 15:6 - And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.)

Eve is not precise in any of her statements of God's Word:

| EVE | God |
|---|---|
| "We may eat" (she minimized the provision) | "Thou mayest freely eat" (2:16) |
| "Neither shall ye touch it" (she added to the command) | "Thou shalt not eat of it " (2:17) |
| "Lest ye die" (she weakened the penalty) | "Thou shalt surely die" (2:17) |

## VI. Satan DENYS the consequences for yielding to temptation

("Ye shall not surely die")

**v. 4**

Satan quotes what God said exactly in 2:17, but adds just one word: "NOT"

That one little addition totally conveys the opposite of what God said. The devil deliberately lied by adding to and changing God's Word.

"The construction of the Hebrew stresses the boldness of this denial: 'Not - you shall surely die." In the normal construction, the negative would [immediately] precede the finite verb" (Ross, p. 135).

Satan's lies today are the same:

--There are no severe consequences to sin.
--There is no judgment to fear.
--There is no hell to dread.

## VII. Satan provokes DISTRUST in the goodness of God

("For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then…")

Satan implicitly questions God's integrity, that He is not perfectly good after all. Why would a good God withhold such easily attainable knowledge?

**v. 5**

**"For God doth know" -** Satan in effect accuses God of selfishness (keeping the best knowledge for Himself); he leads Eve to believe that God was withholding something from her that would benefit her if she had it.

God, however, only and always gives what is good (Ja. 1:17); "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." If He keeps something from us, He does so with good reason.

Satan, the author of the lie that magical "spiritual" qualities reside in objects, basically told Eve that some sacramental quality of power resided in the fruit. By eating it, she would attain wisdom!

## VIII. Satan dangles DESIRE in front of our eyes

("your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good & evil")

**v. 5**

**"ye shall be as gods" -** "as *Elohim*" (the plural name for the singular triune Godhead). (cp. Gen. 1:1; 3:22).

Satan's biggest lie is that man can share in deity.

**'Ye shall be as gods" –** this was Lucifer's goal (Is. 14:14 - I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.)

This same lie is today believed by New Ager's and Mormons.

**"Like God, knowing good and evil" -** God knew about evil - conceptually; however, Eve was about to know it both conceptually and experientially. Satan obviously hides this truth from Eve.

**v. 6**

Although Eve did not have a sin nature at the point of temptation (in no way did she have within her a rebellious spirit to defy God), she did have natural appetites and desires (which in and of themselves are not sinful; but become sinful when satisfied outside of God's boundaries).

To be tempted is not sin, but to give in to it is.

As she gazed upon the tree, Eve thought, "The tree contains real fruit, attractive fruit, and mysteriously magical fruit that imparts wisdom. What could be wrong with all of that?"

**"Wise" -** Wise concerning evil.

The devil had successfully teased Eve's curiosity. She thought, "I wonder what it would be like to learn about evil." The subject fascinated her. Satan today tempts by creating a curiosity. "I wonder what that experience would feel like."

The tree looked edible and attractive. The fruit was beautiful with no apparent ugliness.

There is a beautiful side to evil. Satan, the masterful artist, can manipulate any situation to make it so appealing to the five senses (song: "It can't be wrong when it feels so right").

> John Piper says that sin (lust for example) "gets its power by persuading me to believe that I will be more happy if I follow it. The power of all temptation is the prospect that it will make me happier." quoted in Putting Your Past Behind You, E. Lutzer, Here's Life, 1990, p.54

Temptation, though it may appear in different packaging and come in different shapes and sizes will always appeal to one of three areas of human weakness:

lust of the flesh
lust of the eyes
pride of life

(Cp. I John 2:16; Gen. 3:1ff; Mt. 4:4ff)

**Satan's 3 points of attack:**

| I John 2:16 | The Lust of the FLESH | The Lust of the EYES | The Pride of LIFE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Genesis 3:6** | And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, | and that it was p**leasant to the eyes**, | and a tree to be **desired to make one wise** |
| **Luke 4:3-7** | And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made **bread** | And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, **shewed** unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. | And the devil said unto him, All this **power** will I give thee, and the **glory** of them…If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. |

Satan's package of basic lies has never changed; he uses the same techniques but simply disguises them in new wrappings.

Note the steps to sin:

1. She "saw" . . . (It looked okay)

2. She "took" . . . (It felt okay)

3. She "ate" . . . (It tasted okay)

4. She "gave"

**"Gave also unto her husband" -** No one falls alone; when we sin, we will have a natural tendency to involve others. It eases the guilt to know that we are not alone in the transgression.

Eve approaches Adam with the fruit with an evident chunk missing out of it and he notices: She is still alive! She didn't die after all! Perhaps he thought, "God must have lied to me!" So he then, at her suggestion, took a bite.

Just because the effects of sin are not always immediately apparent, does not mean that sin offers anything less than death! Sin always pays its wages, but it doesn't necessarily pay on the first day of the work week.

Adam and Eve did not die on the day they ate. They died in relationship to God; they died to ever experiencing a life free from sin; and the reality of physical death moved right into their body. Adam would begin the process of aging at that very moment.

While Eve had been completely deceived, Adam knew full well that he was willfully disobeying God's command ( I Tim. 2:14; Rom. 5:12, 17-19). He could not blame anyone or anything (not society [there was none]; not circumstances [they were perfect]; not heredity [he (unlike us) had no inherited sin nature]

The sin was more than merely eating forbidden fruit; it was in disobeying the Word of God (2:17).

Every time a person disobeyed a command of God, he/she sins. Disobedience involves both sins of commission and omission.

**v. 7**

Apparently Eve's eyes were not opened until Adam ate. The reality and severity of what they did settled into their consciousness. They had now experienced evil. The emptiness or spiritual nakedness felt on the inside was coupled with an awareness of their physical nakedness on the outside (which Satan probably told them - v. 11).

CONCLUSION:

Satan today (as in Eden) attacks the same 3 doctrines:

1. He attacks God's Word (provokes doubts of it)

2. He attacks God's judgment (denies it)

3. He attacks God's goodness and love

Essentials for Victory over Temptation:

1. A thorough knowledge of God's Word
2. A healthy fear of God, and of sin's consequences
3. An unwavering trust in God's goodness
4. A refusal to walk by sight, but by faith.

Although God is not responsible for the choice Adam made, he allowed Adam (a free moral agent with a free will - not a robot or automaton) the possibility of passing or failing the test.

So then, this brings up the ultimate question regarding the test of Adam:

> If God is omniscient, He therefore knew the result of the test (he knew Adam would fail). If He knew Adam would sin, why did He allow the test? Why did He allow man to fall into sin?

By allowing man to sin, God would have the opportunity to express His mercy and grace. These are two attributes of God which would forever be undisplayed had not the reality of sin come into existence.

Additional thoughts on temptation: I Cor. 10:13 - There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

***You don't have to be a victim of temptations; You can be a victor over them!***

*I Corinthians 10:13 confirms 6 truths about the temptations you face:*

1. **You are not alone; Others have had the same temptations**
   *("There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man")*

2. **God is in sovereign control over the tests He allows you to face**
   *("But God is faithful, who will not suffer you ...")*

3. **Your trial is not too great for you to handle**
   *("to be tempted above that ye are able")*

4. **God will always provide a way out without you giving in**
   *("...but will with the temptation also make a way to escape")*

5. **Your trials will not continue forever**
   *("...a way to escape..")*

6. **You can count on it, God will enable you to stand up under the pressure without caving under**
   *("...that ye may be able to bear it")*

***How To Keep Temptation From Ensnaring You In Its Web:***

1. **Feed your new nature and starve the old**

2. **Don't make an occasion for the flesh** (Rom. 13:14)

"Don't set the table if you don't want to eat."

Cut off stimuli. Don't view, read suggestive material.

3. **Keep <u>short accounts</u> with God**

   (confess your sin right away so Satan can't build a stronghold in your life - I Jn. 1:9)

4. **Stay <u>busy serving God</u>**

   "Idle hands are the devil's workshop."

5. **<u>Love God</u> and His ways and you will have proper motivation to resist displeasing Him**

6. **Face any trial with the <u>right attitude</u>** (*"Joy"* - Ja. 1:2)

7. **Remember Who is interceding for you** (Rom. 8:26-27)

8. **<u>Don't</u> follow your <u>heart</u>; follow your faith** (Jer. 17:9 - *"The heart is deceitful above all things"*; I Jn. 5:4)

9. **Take the <u>long look</u> and ask, "Where will this decision lead me or others?"** (The pleasures of sin are but for a season.)

10. **Be dressed with God's <u>armor</u>** (Eph. 6:10-18)

11. **Be filled with God's <u>Word</u>** (Mt. 4:1-11)

    Scripture memory and meditation is vital.