

The serpent was used to tempt Eve, causing the fall of mankind. What is hidden in that symbol of the serpent?

And the serpent was more crafty than any animal of the field which Jehovah Elohim had made. And it said to the woman, Is it even so, that God has said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? - Genesis 3:1

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Sources -

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Introduction -

In this lesson we will see the story of the garden of Eden, in the east, the temptation of Eve by Satan, and the fall of man from grace. The result is his eviction from the garden paradise they had been placed in by God.

The lesson text is Genesis Chapter 3 -

1 And the serpent was more crafty than any animal of the field which Jehovah Elohim had made. And it said to the woman, Is it even so, that God has said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

And the serpent - H5175 נָחָשׁ nâchâsh naw-khawsh' From H5172; **a snake** (from its hiss): - serpent.

Comments -

Bullinger's Companion Bible (see Appendix 19) says the word also means a shining one, as with an angelic being, which Satan was before his fall. He sees the tempter here as Satan himself, and not a serpent, perhaps with the name becoming attached to the serpent symbolically. That answer isn't entirely satisfying. God pronounces a curse on the tempter, specifically referring to the serpents crawling movement. That seems to imply that a serpent was there. As a side note, many have seen that as an indication the serpent had limbs and walked before this curse. Is there any truth to that incredible idea? The ground is also cursed. Perhaps that is the serpent's punishment, having to slither through an environment no longer hospitable. Whatever the meaning, the curse to my mind indicates a serpent was there at the temptation. There is no doubt that Satan, himself, is seen as the one actually tempting Eve.

Accepting the presence of a serpent at the tree, there are many questions that come to mind. Why is it used in the temptation? What are its qualifications for the task? Was it made for the temptation, or simply available? Is the serpent itself speaking? Or is it used by Satan as a channel visual, or otherwise?

more crafty - H6175 אָרֻמַּע 'ârûm aw-room' Passive participle of H6191; **cunning (usually in a bad sense)**: - crafty, prudent, subtil.
Emphasis mine.

Note on H6175 –

Actually the majority of uses of this word don't indicate cunning in a bad sense. The first three occurrences of the word in Genesis 3:1, Job 5:12, and Job 15:5 do indicate that. There are eight more occurrences of the word in The Proverbs, and in those it is used of wisdom or the like.

Barnes Notes on the Bible from the Pocket e-Sword Bible program -

...Gen_3:1

The serpent is here called a "beast of the field"; that is, neither a domesticated animal nor one of the smaller sorts. The Lord God had made it, and therefore it was a creature called into being on the same day with Adam. It is not the wisdom, but the wiliness of the serpent which is here noted. This animal is destitute of arms or legs by which to escape danger. It is therefore thrown back upon instinct, aided by a quick and glaring eye, and a rapid dart and recoil, to evade the stroke of violence, and watch and seize the unguarded moment for inflicting the deadly bite. Hence, the wily and insidious character of its instinct, which is noticed to account for the mode of attack here chosen, and the style of the conversation. The whole is so deeply designed, that the origin and progress of evil in the breast is as nearly as possible such as it might have been had there been no prompter. No startling proposal of disobedience is made, no advice, no persuasion to partake of the fruit is employed. The suggestion or assertion of the false only is plainly offered; and the bewildered mind is left to draw its own false inferences, and pursue its own misguided course. The tempter addresses the woman as the more susceptible and unguarded of the two creatures he would betray. He ventures upon a half-questioning, half-insinuating remark: "It is so, then, that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden." This seems to be a feeler for some weak point, where the fidelity of the woman to her Maker might be shaken. It hints at something strange, if not unjust or unkind, on the part of God. "Why was any tree withheld?" he would insinuate....

2 And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden;

3 but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, and **ye shall not touch it**, lest ye die.

Comments -

and ye shall not touch it - Is that true? God said in Genesis 2

Gen 2:15 And Jehovah Elohim took Man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to till it and to guard it.

Gen 2:16 And Jehovah Elohim commanded Man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou shalt freely eat;

Gen 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt certainly die.**

Gen 2:18 And Jehovah Elohim said, It is not good that Man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate, his like.

Gen 2:22 And Jehovah Elohim built the rib that he had taken from Man into a woman; and brought her to Man.

A few observations. Jehovah God had actually said that Adam, and his descendent's, were not to eat any of the fruit from that tree, and that they would die if they did. He did not say they couldn't touch the tree. It does say that Adam, and thus his descendent's, were placed in the garden to tend to it. Presumably, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would also need tending. Genesis 2:22 shows that Eve was created by Jehovah God after He had given Adam those instructions. So Adam must have had the responsibility to pass them on to Eve, and all their descendent's. Was there some confusion, or error in the transmission of those instructions? Or was Eve simply deceived, or even wanting to be misled? She must have been there by the tree because Satan immediately talked to her about it. Was she tending to the tree, or spending too much time looking at it? Does her addition to God's command "...and ye shall not touch it..." indicate a misunderstanding of the instructions, or too much time thinking about it?

4 And the serpent said to the woman, Ye will not certainly die;

5 but God knows that in the day ye eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and ye will be as God, knowing good and evil.

Comments -

Notice the form that Satan's lie takes.

Ye will not certainly die – Satan then moved into the situation carefully. He reasoned with her that she surely won't die. Why just touching the tree, and you would fall down dead right there? How could that be? How could Jehovah God do that to her, Eve, the very crown and beauty of His creation?

your eyes will be opened – Why surely she, and Adam of course, would become knowledgeable to the level of lower gods at least. They would be able to reason, knowing things good, and bad. Something they didn't really understand yet. They would understand these just as Jehovah God does.

It seems that, in one way or another, this is the heart of the false religions, the esoteric, or cultic knowledge still today. The idea of man's religions often seems to be to enlighten oneself. Even to unleash the very god hood within one's self. We are told that we need to free ourselves from the evil, and the carnal, and to achieve spirituality, freedom from the carnal side of life, and oneness with the great universal spirit. In other words, we will know as gods. We will be gods. We will free our own selves from the imperfection of this carnality we inhabit, and shall ascend to the heavens. It seems that the approach of Satan has not changed since the fall.

Eze 28:1 And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying,

*Eze 28:2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because thy heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a *god, I sit in the seat of God, in the heart of the seas, (and thou art a man, and not *God,) and thou settest thy heart as the heart of God:*

Eze 28:11 And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying,

Eze 28:12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Thou, who sealest up the measure of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,

Eze 28:13 thou wast in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was thy covering: the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the chrysolite, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the carbuncle, and the emerald, and gold. The workmanship of thy tambours and of thy pipes was in thee: in the day that thou wast created were they prepared.

Eze 28:14 Thou wast the anointed covering cherub, and I had set thee so : thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou didst walk up and down in the midst of stones of fire.

Eze 28:15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways, from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee.

This is not simply a reference to the ruler of Tyre, as some say. That earthly ruler, became proud and lifted himself up thinking he would become a god, as did Satan, long before. No man was the created by God directly, after Adam. All men since then have been born. No man was the anointed covering cherub, but Satan was. Satan was lifted up long before, and said he would become a god himself. Likewise, this earthly ruler, under Satan's influence has fallen into the same pride. Perfecting himself, he will rise up and become a god.

and ye will be as God, knowing good and evil - Why, could it be that God is a little jealous and concerned lest they become too knowledgeable, just like Him. His very creation might start understanding as fully as He does! That seems to be Satan's suggestion.

The manner of Satan's deception has not changed greatly since that time.

It is very interesting that shamans of cultures throughout the world encounter beings, while in trance states, that are in the form of giant serpents. Dragon like creatures, and other animal and human forms, are also seen. Some have reported that these beings claim to have been involved in mankind's beginning and the very revelation of knowledge to him. The same that Satan here implies to Eve.

6 And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a pleasure for the eyes, and the tree was to be desired to give intelligence; and she took of its fruit, and ate, and gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Comments -

And the woman saw that the tree was good for food – We may not know for certain, how much Eve misunderstood her instructions from God, but when she looked at the tree now, she saw it as good and attractive, and not something to be afraid of. God had not said it wasn't good, or attractive, but simply that they were not to eat of it. The fact that they did not die shows it was not poisonous. The test therefore was a simple matter of obedience and trust in God's provision, or trust in Satan's deception instead. Eve choose Satan's enlightenment and deception, and they did begin to physically die.

and she took of its fruit, and ate, and gave also to her husband with her, and he ate
There is the mystery, why did Adam eat the fruit Eve gave him? Was it a matter of love? If I lose here I will surely die of loneliness?

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.

Comments -

they knew that they were naked – Their perspective about themselves had changed tremendously, but not for the better. They had been naked before, but were now aware of it in such a way that they felt ashamed. They now sensed their own imperfections, and perhaps, their naked exposure to the elements, and to each other. Now they were acting like they knew both good and evil. But they weren't powerful enough to resist the evil. Is there any truth to the idea, which some have, that they were originally covered with a transparent glow from God's presence? Once that presence was broken, the covering was gone. Moses spent more time directly in God's presence than, possibly, anyone after Adam, and he had an overpowering glow about himself.

Exodus 34:

34 But when Moses went in before Jehovah to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.

35 And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

8 And they heard the voice of Jehovah Elohim, walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah Elohim, in the midst of the trees of the garden.

Comments -

And they heard the voice of Jehovah Elohim, walking in the garden in the cool of the day. – Aside from the main thought of this lesson, there is this fascinating sentence. Jehovah God (the only true God) was in the habit of coming down and visiting with His creation every evening after the warmer time of the day was over with. The sense is obvious; He did this regularly. God was not concerned with the heat, but the beings on the earth had to take account of the times of day. Remember that the stars, from our perspective, gave us measurements for the seasons. Yet there are many galaxies that we cannot see without a powerful telescope. Thus God has made these, it seems, with other ideas than just mankind in mind. I understand that other ancient cultures believed that god came down to visit with his creation. I have heard Dr. Gene Scott teach many times that the ancients viewed god as having lived on a high mountain in the far north. Perhaps the true God did actually dwell, at some level, and at some times, with His creation until the human masters He set over the creation choose to trust Lucifer's deceptive insights over God's promises, and obvious provision. This verse indicates that God did come down regularly and visit with His creation. What an incredible picture of mankind's original state.

9 And Jehovah Elohim called to Man, and said to him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I feared, because I am naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou art naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee not to eat?

Comments -

Who told thee that thou art naked? – It's clear they knew they had changed after eating the fruit, and they sensed it quickly. Were they physically different after the fall? Had they really been covered by a glow from God's presence as mentioned under the verses above? If not, then what was so different now that they could see it this quickly? But then, God's question "Who told thee that thou art naked?" could be read to say that they might need to be told they were naked. It seems more likely that they sensed the differences, sensed the lacking of God's closeness, and felt shame over their sin. The Keil and Delitzsch commentary takes that perspective.

Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament from the e-Sword Bible program -

...And when Adam said that he had hidden himself through fear of his nakedness, and thus sought to hide the sin behind its consequences, his disobedience behind the feeling of shame; this is not to be regarded as a sign of peculiar obduracy, but easily admits of a psychological explanation, viz., that at the time he actually thought more of his nakedness and shame than of his transgression of the divine command, and his consciousness of the effects of his sin was keener than his sense

of the sin itself. To awaken the latter God said, “*Who told thee that thou wast naked?*” and asked him whether he had broken His command...

They see that Adam did not yet really connect his sin with his fall, and God asked the question to force him to connect the two and see his guilt.

12 And Man said, The woman, whom thou hast given [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.

13 And Jehovah Elohim said to the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate.

Comments -

...The woman, whom thou hast given [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate – The accusations and shifting of blame begin. What Adam said is very true. But he didn't have to eat that fruit Eve gave him. The story makes it sound like he was right there with the woman looking at the tree when Satan tempted her. But Adam had been given the directions about this tree by God. He knew what the commandment was. So he must have given them to Eve, and she was the one deceived, not Adam. See 1 Timothy 2:14.

1Ti 2:13 for Adam was formed first, then Eve: 1Ti 2:14 and Adam was not deceived; but the woman, having been deceived, was in transgression.

Did Adam explain God's orders to Eve clearly? Why did he give in when he saw her fall into temptation?

14 And Jehovah Elohim said to the serpent, Because thou hast done this, be thou cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. On thy belly shalt thou go, and eat dust all the days of thy life.

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall crush thy head, and thou shalt crush his heel.

Comments -

...he shall crush thy head, and thou shalt crush his heel – The reference is to the Savior crushing Satan's power over man. But when God took on the form of man, He allowed Himself to be harmed by Satan, and that is what the snake striking the mans heel refers to.

16 To the woman he said, **I will greatly increase thy travail and thy pregnancy;** with pain thou shalt bear children; and to thy husband shall be thy desire, and he shall rule over thee.

Comments -

... I will greatly increase thy travail... – Notice that it is not said that God would give pain in childbirth, but that it would greatly increase. Many have a view of the garden, as if there was not pain of any kind, and everything was perfect, however they view

perfection in their imagination. Adam and Eve had to work, grow crops, and pick them to eat. But it was clearly a well balanced environment, in which they didn't have to toil laboriously, for insufficient produce. They could feel pain, if nothing else, as a warning when they were in danger that they might not yet recognize. But there was balance, and the presence of God Himself, interfacing with His creation, daily. How different it would become now.

17 And to Adam he said, **Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife**, and eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed be the ground on thy account; with toil shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life;**

18 and **thorns and thistles shall it yield thee**; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.

19 **In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread**, until thou return to the ground: for out of it wast thou taken. For dust thou art; and unto dust shalt thou return.

Comments -

...On thy belly shalt thou go... – I have seen many Christians take this to mean that the serpent originally had limbs, and walked. Or does it use the fact of the serpents crawling motion as an example of the curse and loss of prestige Satan was punished with?

...In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread... The very ground, which yielded more than enough before, is now cursed. It will be much harder to raise just enough food to survive. It will now grow thorns, and weeds in abundance. They will fight to survive until they physically die, and then return to that same cursed ground. They could have been the immortal leaders of the human race, the entire race growing in knowledge and wisdom incrementally, and perhaps unendingly. But now they face the judgment, and an unbalanced planet, and culture, without the anchor of God's loving personal presence and overabundance of provision.

20 And Man called his wife`s name Eve; because she is the mother of all living.

Eve - חַוְּוָה chavvâh khav-vaw' Causative from H2331; **lifegiver**; Chavvah (or Eve), the first woman: - Eve.

Comments -

Adam Clarke tells us that it is impossible to understand the sense of the meaning here without an understanding of the Hebrew words. He indicates that the meaning of the Hebrew wording is that Eve is called "life", because she has given life, as the Greek Septuagint also translates it.

21 And Jehovah Elohim made Adam and his wife coats of skin, and clothed them.

Comments -

And Jehovah Elohim made Adam and his wife coats of skin... The coats they received were of animal skins. Thus physical death has just occurred. It is hard not to see the sense of a sacrifice here being made to provide for mankind a temporary covering for their sin, in place of the covering they had had. And a substitutionary death, in their place, has provided this temporary covering. But the personal presence of God will now end.

22 And Jehovah Elohim said, Behold, Man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever ...!

23 Therefore Jehovah Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.

24 And he drove out Man; and he set the Cherubim, and the flame of the flashing sword, toward the east of the garden of Eden, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Comments -

And now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever ...! The translation gives the sense that God now moved in haste to prevent humanity from going ahead and entering into eternal life in such a fallen, non-trusting, sinful state. Apparently they could have done so, had not God moved and prevented it. That implies that the tree of life in the garden, was really empowered with some elements that would enrich, the human body, and prevent it from decaying in the many ways that ours does throughout our lives. Was there actually something special in the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as well? Or was it simply a test, of the will, to see if our first parents would trust what God said, instead of what the fallen angel, Lucifer said. But they trusted Lucifer more, and fell themselves. Our sole hope is now in a Saviour who will, in kindness, lift us up, and forgive sin freely, just because we ask, because we cannot now cleanse ourselves.

And he drove out Man; and he set the Cherubim, and the flame of the flashing sword... God did not simply ask Adam and Eve to leave. Perhaps they would not have left easily, in fear of what awaited them outside of the garden area. He thrust them out of the garden, and placed Cherubim, a class of ministering angelic beings, at the east side of the garden, along with a flashing sword, to forcefully prevent mankind from entering the garden again.

Conclusion -

As we have studied this lesson, we've seen the garden of Eden, where God placed Adam after his creation, and the creation of Eve, his wife. This garden paradise was located in the east. We saw Eve's temptation by Satan, her failure, and the fall of mankind from grace. They believed Satan's lie, and trusted him more than the Creator. The result was their forceful eviction from the garden paradise they had been placed in by God. Then the Cherubim, and a flaming sword were physically placed in front of the gateway entrance to this garden area, to forcefully keep and one from re-entering the garden again.