

## Creation: Broken part 1 Genesis 3:1-7

*"So small a thing it seemed taking that fruit. So hard in its undoing"*

**Introduction:** Wars are always dangerous, but a war that wages battle against us without our knowledge are the most dangerous. We've been talking about our origin story the last few weeks, and it's been a look at the world in the ideal before sin entered in and tainted both man and creation. There was perfect worship, work, marriage, and relationship between God, creation, and man. However, a silent war had begun somewhere between the creation of all things in heaven and earth and the narrative of Genesis 3. Angels were created beings that sang in response to all that God created (Job 38:7), with one in particular standing out. He was in Garden and created on the day that all the gold and precious stones were created (Ezek. 28:13), anointed as a guardian, blameless in his ways (Ezek. 28:14-15). But this particular angel grew proud because of his given beauty (28:17), saying in his heart "I will ascend to heaven above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far reaches of the North; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will make myself like the Most High** (Isaiah 14:12-13). It was this one that rebelled against God, taking 1/3 of the created angels with him (Rev. 12:4), and he was thrown out of heaven onto earth, along with the angels who rebelled with him (Rev. 12:9). This ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the world, became the mortal enemy of God and man, and we not only feel the effects of his work today, we see the battle he waged against us in the beginning.

This morning we will see the work of Satan as a deceiver and see his schematic for deception. Satan wages war on God's family and not only wants to see the church be inept (Eph. 6:11-17), but loves to see marriages fall apart. These first few verses in Genesis 3 unpack for us the main reason you have problems in your marriage, why you lie, why nothing seems to satisfy, why you can't find lasting happiness, why you want to hide your sin, why you are in pain, why we get sick, why bad things happen, why there is disaster, why the world is dying and why every good thing seems distorted somehow. The Fall of mankind into sin effected and touched EVERYTHING in this world. Because of what happened in Genesis 3, we are forever tainted: **Romans 5:12** - *"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."* We are all born into this world as sinners, dead in our trespasses (Eph. 2:1-3). But we are equally reminded of the hope that comes through one man, Jesus Christ who is the better and perfect Adam, the One who brings life (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

### Deceptions Originator (1a)

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made...*

#### Person of the Deceiver

We come now to a familiar story that is one of the first pictures in every illustrated children's Bible. The dramatic story takes place around a tree that had nothing spectacular about it other than God had told Adam not to eat of it. For the first time in the text of Scripture we have an animal begin talking to the created woman (named Eve in 3:20), and in the narrative, that does not seem odd at all. Should it have been? Maybe. There is nothing recorded about other animals talking, so this should have struck Eve as unusual and she should have been on guard, but apparently this did not freak her out. Perhaps its because up until now, there was nothing bad in creation so Adam and Eve were trusting, like naive kids who have been sheltered from anything evil. We know a couple of things about **the serpent** from this

text. **1) He was created** - God created Satan, which means he is not like God but bound by the rules God placed on him **2) He was crafty** - The word was neutral but in its context, it means that Satan **disguised** himself as something that he was not. This is consistent with who he is and how he is described in Scripture:

He is a liar, murderer, and Father of lies (John 8:44)

He is one who seeks after those he hopes to devour (1 Pet. 5:8)

He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13-15)

He is a tempter (1 Cor. 7:5; Eph. 4:27)

He holds captive (2 Tim. 2:26), Torments (2 Cor. 12:7) and seeks to deceive God's children (2 Cor. 11:3)

In other words, this serpent who is known from here out as Satan or the devil (and 29 other Biblically given names) acts out of who he is. But what is his nature, or how does he operate?

### Nature of the Deceiver

He is not passive but active. Though all the power he possess, which is tremendous (it at least matches that of Michael the archangel (see Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9), all of his power and authority is delegated. God has given him the ability to have control over parts of the world, nature, and even the physical lives of people, but all under the ultimate authority of God. Satan could do hateful things to Job and his family, but only with God's permission to the limit he was allowed. The foundation of everything Satan does is **based on a lie, it is by nature deceptive, and though he will not defeat God's plan, believes he can**. He knows the end but is deluded and still seeks to hinder and thwart anyone who would see Christ and the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4).

His tools and strategy are to set traps or snares (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26), to have a battle plan of designs or strategies (2 Cor. 2:11), and to use schemes or tactics (Eph. 6:11). The objective of all his planning is get mankind to **humanize God and deify man**, pushing us to desire self-autonomy and independence. The battle ground IS ALWAYS in the mind, a battle for truth and belief, and if he can get people to believe his lies, he has already won in his mind. What we see in Genesis 3:1-6 is not something old and irrelevant but something timeless, that goes on today **since there ain't nothing new under the sun**.

### Deceptions Strategy (1b-5)

*"He said the to the woman, 'Did God actually say 'You shall not eat of **any** tree in the Garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, '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.**' But the serpent said to the woman, '**You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Him, knowing good and evil.**'"*

### The Art of Questioning

It is clear in reading this text that Satan came with certain strategies. He'd already disarmed Eve by speaking to her through an animal, which though strange did not put off alarms in her mind. If it were me, mind you, I would have simply had Adam and Eve play **Monopoly** for the first time and they would have fallen into sin for sure, as all do who play that wicked game. But Satan rarely engages in frontal attacks where he announces that he's coming, but rather engages in **guerilla warfare**, out of the shadows and seemingly non-threatening. Notice he did NOT begin by making **declarations but by asking questions**, yet he never asks questions that he did not already know the answers. In the art of interrogation, asking questions is a proven way to either confuse or get information out of a suspect,

putting them on their heels and out of control of the situation. The nature of this question in particular was **leading, driving toward a pre-determined outcome.**

In asking questions that desired no honest answer, his hope was to move from **question to questioning**, getting Eve to begin to doubt herself and God. Satan's plan of deception, both here and the rest of Scripture, is to get mankind to doubt **both God's character and God's Word.** We see this here and in the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Notice that he questioned God's character at the incredulous nature of the question ("Did he really say you can't eat of this one? C'mon man!), and **creating confusion in Eve's mind.** Remember, though Satan is a liar, he knows the truth. He does not play in the sandbox of out and out lie, but rather adds enough truth to make something plausible, lobbing out half-truths that seem right to us.

His goal was also to Eve to question God's Word. In this, he is dangerously good. Notice what is wrong with Eve's answer.

**1) He got her to focus MORE on the negative command than the positive** - There was an abundance of positive commands in the Garden. In fact, ALL OF THEM WERE POSITIVE except one. ONE! And that one command had absolutely no bearing on their happiness, provision, or contentment. There was nothing special about the fruit or the tree. It was simply there as a test. This happens to us today as we will define our relationship with God by the negative, like what we avoid, or think about Him negatively, like focusing on all the things We CANNOT DO. God doesn't want us to have fun...or enjoy life...or anti-sex. Instead of focusing on the beauty of marriage, the protective and enjoyment that can be found there, it has been described as restricting and prohibitive.

**2) He got her to ADD commands on top of what God declared** - Notice that in her confusion, she added the caveat "neither shall we touch it" to the primary command God gave. Satan is the master at using parts of Scripture and either get us to focus too much on one thing (like ONLY focusing on God's love but not His wrath), or taking something out of context for our gain (like "I can do all things through Christ"). We can turn passages given to Israel alone as mantras for health and prosperity now (2 Chronicles 7:14; Jer. 29:11).

What is the solution or the defense against these strategies? We must know the truth, knowing the WHOLE truth. In order to stand firm against the schemes of the devil, we must take up the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17) and be trained up in the words of faith and of the good doctrine we have followed (1 Tim. 4:6).

### **The Offer of Autonomy**

After answering in confusion, Satan knew he had Eve on the ropes. Seeing the crack in her understanding he then came out with the definitive statement against God: "**You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Him, knowing good and evil.**" What did he do here?

**1) Outright questioned God's truthfulness and goodness** - God told you a lie. You won't die. There will not be consequences. Do it and be happy.

**2) Positioned God as lesser: He's withholding from you and jealous** - God is holding back from you because He doesn't want to share with you

**3) Satan himself knows better than God, since he truly knows God's mind** - The serpent claimed to speak on behalf of God, stating that he was the one who truly knew the mind of God. Remember, we have the mind of Christ and the Spirit of God who convicts and guides.

**4) You can disobey and get what you want** - Not only would disobedience come with no consequence, but would actually give what is missing in life. Remember, Eve had everything she needed for life and contentment. All she knew was fullness, pleasure, and happiness. But she was convinced it still was not enough.

**5) You will be like God** - The offer of self-autonomy is revealed. "You want to be like God? Go against what He said. No one can tell you what to do! Take it in your own hands and you will finally have all that you've ever wanted: you will be God!"

### Deceptions Consequence (6-7)

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate and she also gave some to her husband **who was with her**, and he ate. **Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.** And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loinclothes."*

#### Yield to temptation

You know how the story plays out. Eve considered the fruit on the tree in light of all that the serpent had just said and found it to be the missing ingredient in her life, so she reached out, took, and ate. This is really no different than what we face today since temptation works on our mind and desires. Notice how Eve's decision parallels how we are tempted today:

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world ---- the **desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life** --- is not from the Father but from the world.*

1 John 2:15-16

When we used to work with young men in youth ministry we called this the "**Gold, Girls, and Glory**" passage. Sinful temptation appeals to our flesh, that part of us that is not redeemed and still struggles with what is dead to us, our eyes, where we covet after, compare, and lust, and the boastful pride of life where we fail to trust the promise of God and take matters into our own hands.

#### Failure of Roles

Whenever I think through this passage I remember the way I saw it in Sunday School or illustrated Bibles. Some have Adam and Eve by a tree with leaves over their unmentionable parts, eating an apple as a snake is wrapped around a branch of the tree. Children's Bibles are fantastic but sometimes they do not help us see the whole story. Most often as I ask people where they believed Adam to be during this conversation, they place Adam out in the field working (or on his phone somewhere). But it is clear that he was right there next to her. Look again at verse 6. "She gave some to her husband who was **with her.**" Adam was right there. The man who God had created to image forth God's glory in creation, who was given the specific command by God **before Eve was created**, who was supposed to protect and care for his bride, stood there DOING NOTHING as his wife was deceived. **Adam was passive, not willing to say the hard word "no", not willing to be the bad guy, and instead ABDICATING his role of leadership and responsibility to his wife.** We discussed this in our shepherding group and our ladies pointed out Adam's passive nature, and my retort was, "Yep, and he was the perfect husband ladies!".

The abdication of his role has simply been pronounced since the Fall, as men have struggled with this ever since. Next week we will look at how this specifically affected marriage relationships today, with both men and women having a hard time playing out the roles God gave, railing against them and desiring the other role, believing it to be better, easier, or higher.

### Knowledge of Evil

Satan deceived but there was a kernel of truth in what he told Eve. Adam and Eve did understand evil after eating the fruit and they did not immediately die. However, death was now sure to come physically as they would return to dust (Gen. 3:19). Death is by definition separation, and they also felt the sting of spiritual separation from God since they were no longer holy thus able to be in His presence. With the knowledge of Evil came the feelings of shame, forcing this couple to cover themselves and no longer walk in openness. They now hid themselves from each other which meant they would not share an unhindered relationship as they did before but now would have layers of guilt that would make their relationship difficult.

### Deceptions Hope

*"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples and said '**take, eat; this is my body.**' And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, '**Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**'"*

Matthew 26:26-28

### Took and ate replaced by "Take and Eat"

Where is the hope in all of this? The first thing is that God can be trusted, and He means everything that He says. We can argue the fairness of sin entering the world and brokenness being a reality all because a seemingly small sin like eating of forbidden fruit. But when God says it, he means it and He cannot nor will He ever compromise. He has to uphold His character by justice and His nature by carrying out His wrath on sin, even on those He created. But it is clear that the story does not end here. The serpent led Adam and Eve down a path of sin through deception with the end goal of saying, "**take and eat**", so **Even took it and ate**. Adam followed suit. But this simply makes what Christ did so much sweeter.

*"So small a thing it seemed taking that fruit. So hard in undoing. It took God sending His Son into the world and to the cross before 'take and eat' became verbs of salvation."<sup>1</sup>*

Every month we celebrate Communion and in it, we remember that Jesus offered Himself up with the words, "Take and eat". He undid what Satan thought he had done, bringing life to cursed and rebellious mankind through His obedience and sacrifice. Not only does His Work save me from my sin, offering forgiveness, but it empowers us to see through the lie of deception and see Christ as our all satisfying, joy filled, magnificent Savior.

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<sup>1</sup> Ligon Duncan, Main Session at Together for the Gospel, 2018, "The Whole in our Holiness", but originally from Derek Kidner's meditation on Genesis 3:6