

# Day 1 – Introduction to the Text

## Genesis 3:1-7

Can you imagine what life would have been like for the man and the woman prior to Genesis 3? First, everything in the creation was operating as it should, according to God’s good design. The man and woman had the greenest thumbs in the garden because they didn’t have to fight weeds or deal with drought. The animals were not burdensome to manage, they didn’t snap back, kick, or bite, but instead, freely yielded to the man and woman’s rule. There were no tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, hailstorms, or floods to contend with.

In addition, the man and woman worked together in perfect harmony. They never argued over petty, selfish issues, and their speech was always genuine, totally devoid of self-centered manipulation. They never had to apologize for wronging one another because they always put the other’s interests ahead of their own. Everything they accomplished was done in utter humility and as an act of worship toward the LORD God.

Finally, and best of all, the man and woman had a perfect relationship with the LORD God. They could walk freely with Him in the garden without any separation or distance between them. Also, they could obey His one command without the hindrance of indwelling sin. In fact, the idea of disobeying God’s command did not even cross their minds and why would it—they had everything you could ask for and then some.

Everything in Eden was absolutely perfect—that is, until the woman encountered a crafty serpent in the garden one-day. On that day, everything in the creation changed when the woman exchanged the truth of God for a lie and the man—who was with his wife—listened to her rather than God. On that tragic day, the whole creation groaned as it was subjected to futility by God Himself.

As you study the passage this week, pay careful attention to the conversation between the serpent and the woman. Try to grasp the strategy the serpent uses to subtly tempt the woman—a strategy Satan still employs to tempt us to today.

Scripture Memory: Genesis 3:6

## Day 2 – What Does the Text Say?

Read Genesis 2:15-17 for the context

1. What trees did God say the man could eat from?
2. How much could the man eat?
3. What tree was the man commanded not to eat from? What would happen if he did eat from it?

Read Genesis 3:1-7

1. How does the serpent's question in verse 1 differ from what God said in Genesis 2:16?
2. How does the woman's answer in verses 2-3 differ from what God commanded in Genesis 2:16-17?
3. How does the serpent's statement in verse 4 conflict with God's statement in Genesis 2:17?
4. How is the serpent's suggestion in verse 5 "you will be like God" ironic in light of how the man and the woman were created?

## Day 3 – What Does the Text Mean?

Read Genesis 3:1-7 again

**Verse 1: *Now the serpent...*** “In Egypt, the serpent was associated with both death and wisdom. The Genesis account draws on both aspects in the wisdom dialogue between the serpent and Eve and with the introduction of death after the expulsion from Eden.

Even when not related to a god, the serpent represented wisdom (occult), fertility, health, chaos, and immortality, and was often worshiped. The snake god Apophis was considered the enemy of order. Snakes were also sometimes considered beneficial or protective” (Walton, 33-34).

“The snake was reviled by the Hebrews as a source of uncleanness and a remembered menace. The notion of a slithering snake communicates powerfully that the woman is in grave jeopardy” (Mathews, 235).

***crafty*** [ *‘ārûm*]. “The word play of “nude” and “shrewd” ( *‘ārûm* in 2:25 and 3:1) links the two scenes and draws attention to Adam and Eve’s painful vulnerability. Satan’s craftiness is seen in his cunning distortion of God’s words. With subtle guise, the adversary speaks as a winsome angelic theologian” (Waltke, 90).

***Indeed, has God said...*** “The tactic used by the serpent was to cause doubt in the mind of the woman through interrogation and misrepresentation. First, the opponent does not controvert outright the saying of the Lord (2:16); rather, he questions God’s motivation with the subtle addition ‘really say.’ Second, the serpent uses the name ‘God’ rather than the covenant name ‘Lord’ that has characterized the narrative of 2:4–25, where ‘Lord God’ appears. Third, the serpent reworks the wording of God’s command slightly by (1) adding the negative ‘not’ at the head of the clause, which with ‘any’ expresses an absolute prohibition; (2) omitting the emphatic ‘freely’; (3) using the plural ‘you’ (hence bypassing the man) rather than the singular as in 2:16; and (4) placing the clause ‘from any tree’ at the end of the sentence rather than at the head as in 2:16, thereby robbing God’s command of its nuance of liberality. All of this is to say that the divine injunction in the mouth of the serpent was refashioned for its own interests” (Mathews, 235).

Verses 2-3: *The woman said...* “Instead of turning away, the woman replied, . . . She was aware of the prohibition, therefore, and fully understood its meaning; but she added, “*neither shall ye touch it,*” and proved by this very exaggeration that it appeared too stringent even to her, and therefore that her love and confidence towards God were already beginning to waver. Here was the beginning of her fall: ‘for doubt is the father of sin, and *skepsis* the mother of all transgression; and in this father and this mother, all our present knowledge has a common origin with sin’ (*Ziegler*)” (Keil and Delitzsch, 59).

Verses 4-5: *The serpent said to the woman...* “the serpent made three counterclaims: First, they will not die. Second, ‘your eyes will be opened,’ a metaphor for knowledge, suggesting a newfound awareness not previously possessed. In the Old Testament this awareness sometimes is said to be obtained through divine assistance (e.g., Gen 21:19; 2 Kgs 6:17, 20). And finally, they will gain what belongs to God, ‘knowing good and evil.’ Essentially he is contending that God is holding her back—a claim that is sometimes echoed today” (Mathews, 236-237).

Verses 6-7: “Even before she has eaten of the fruit, the woman is depicted as already usurping God’s role of ‘knowing what is good for them.’ . . . Having shown the temptation as a quest for ‘wisdom’ apart from God, the story comes to an abrupt conclusion in its account of a double act of the transgression: “she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (v. 6b). . . . The thrust of the story, with all its simplicity, lies in the tragic and ironic view it gives of humanity’s illfated quest for wisdom. Ironically, what the snake promised comes true: the man and the woman do become ‘like God’ when they eat of the fruit. The irony lies in the fact that in their creation they were already ‘like God’; they had been created in his image (1:26). . . . Presumably the man and the woman believe they will obtain the knowledge of ‘good and evil’ when they eat the fruit, but they seem to have assumed that their newfound knowledge will lead them only to enjoy the ‘good.’ The possibility that they will also know the ‘bad’ and not the ‘good’ is not raised in the narrative prior to their eating of the fruit” (Sailhamer, 86).

## Day 4 – What Difference Does the Text Make?

Read Genesis 3:1-7 again

1. What are some ways in which our culture conflicts/contradicts with what God commands in the Bible?

2. Why is it important for us to recognize the strategy used by the serpent to tempt the woman?

3. How does our view of God affect the way we respond to temptation?

4. How can we defend ourselves when tempted?

## Day 5 – What Must I Change?

Review and reflect on your study of the passage

1. What parallels exist between the temptation faced by the woman and the temptations that you face even now in your Christian walk?

2. What are some ways in which you can avoid temptation?

3. What strategy do you plan to use the next time you face temptation?

# Bibliography

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update.

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