

Thought For The Week

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Beginnings: Genesis 3:1-7

The Temptation and the Fall

The account of humanity's fall in Genesis 3:1-7 stands as one of the most pivotal passages in Scripture, explaining the origin of evil in human experience and the brokenness we observe today. Following the perfect creation described earlier, chapter 3 shifts dramatically with the entrance of the serpent.

The text describes the serpent as "more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." Drawing from biblical cross-references, this serpent is no ordinary animal. Jesus calls Satan "a murderer from the beginning" and "the father of lies" (John 8:44), while Revelation explicitly identifies him as "that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan" (Revelation 12:9; 20:2). The serpent's ability to speak articulate words implies a supernatural agent: not natural speech (which would contradict human dominion), nor temporary divine empowerment like Balaam's donkey, but Satan's possession or use of the creature. Evil's appearance here follows Satan's own prior fall—likely the war in heaven where he was cast out (Revelation 12:8-9; Luke 10:18).

The temptation begins in verse 1: Satan, through the serpent, misquotes God's command as "you shall not eat from any tree in the garden?"—a deliberate exaggeration that shifts the focus from God's generous provision to apparent restriction. This subtle misinformation allows Satan to control the dialogue and sow doubt without initially attacking God directly.

Eve responds in verses 2-3, correcting the misquote but adding her own words: "you shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die." God's original prohibition (Genesis 2:17) mentioned only eating, with death as the consequence. Her addition suggests she viewed the fruit as inherently dangerous or poisonous—even contact could kill.

Satan escalates in verses 4-5: "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." This includes direct contradiction of death, implied slander (God is lying), and projected motive (God jealously withholds divinity). The entire argument hinges on denying consequences while promising elevation.

Crucially, Satan backs his claims with visual evidence, as verse 6 reveals: "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 desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate." The repeated "saw" emphasizes empirical observation overriding God's word. She sees it good for food—directly countering her fear of poison. It appears delightful, suggesting close presentation of the fruit. And desirable for wisdom, implying a demonstration of intellectual gain.

Verse 7 confirms the fruit's effect: "The eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings." They gain

new knowledge—awareness of nakedness and accompanying shame, emotions previously unknown despite their marriage and solitude. This unwanted "wisdom" verifies Satan's promise but brings immediate spiritual separation from God and eventual physical death.

A textually grounded scenario explains Eve's observations: While tending the garden, she spots a normally mute serpent eating the forbidden fruit without dying. Approaching to watch for consequences, she is stunned when it suddenly speaks: "Indeed, has God said...?" This provides visible proof—no death occurs, and the creature gains articulate speech, demonstrating "opened eyes" and wisdom. The misquoted question now fits perfectly as an opener, exploiting the moment.

Satan's strategy proves masterful and layered:

1. **Doubt** — Misquoted question plants uncertainty about God's word.
2. **Exploitation** — Uses Eve's added fear (poisonous fruit) against her with apparent counter-evidence.
3. **Denial** — Flatly contradicts consequences, replacing fear with promised benefit.
4. **Slander** — Portrays God as jealous liar, turning Provider into competitor.
5. **Pride** — Appeals to autonomy and self-deification, mirroring Satan's fall (Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-17).
6. **Staged proof** — Visual demonstration bypasses reason, appealing to experience.

This pattern persists in temptation today. We must beware Satan's schemes (Ephesians 6:11)—misinformation, half-truths, and denial of the spiritual realm. Modern worldviews often misrepresent Scripture or ignore the supernatural, leading to distorted conclusions. Deep knowledge of God's word counters slander and prideful desires to define good and evil ourselves. Trust Scripture over "evidence" that can be staged—humanity's death was real, though spiritual first.

Adam's presence yet silence highlights another failure: passive leadership. Husbands are called to spiritual headship, protecting against temptation.

Ultimately, Genesis 3:1-7 not only explains evil's human origin but points to redemption. It foreshadows the "seed" who will crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15)—Jesus Christ, who faced the same tempter yet triumphed perfectly by declaring, "It is written." May we follow His example, resisting through God's unchanging truth.

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Beginnings: Temptation & the Fall

In Genesis 3:1-7, the Bible introduces the tragic moment when evil enters humanity's story. After a perfect creation, the serpent—described as more crafty than any other beast—approaches Eve. Identified through Scripture as Satan (Revelation 12:9; 20:2), he speaks through the serpent, marking the first recorded lie: a deliberate misquote of God's command.

Satan begins subtly: "Indeed, has God said you shall not eat from any tree in the garden?" This plants doubt without direct attack. Eve corrects him but adds to God's word, saying they cannot eat or even touch the fruit lest they die, revealing her view of it as inherently poisonous.

Satan counters boldly: "You surely will not die," accusing God of lying out of jealousy, claiming the fruit will open their eyes and make them like God, knowing good and evil. To convince her, he provides visual evidence. The text repeatedly emphasizes what Eve "saw": the fruit good for food (contradicting her fear of poison), delightful to the eyes, and desirable for wisdom.

One fitting interpretation: Eve witnesses the serpent eating the fruit without dying, then suddenly speaking intelligently—demonstrating no death and gained wisdom. Startled, she eats, gives to Adam (who is with her but silent), and they eat.

Immediately, their eyes open: they know nakedness, feel shame, and cover themselves with fig leaves. Spiritual death occurs instantly; physical follows eventually.

Satan's multi-layered strategy—doubt, exploitation of misunderstanding, denial of consequences, slander of God, appeal to pride, and staged proof—remains the pattern of temptation today. Yet this passage foreshadows hope: the seed (Jesus) who will crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15), perfectly resisting temptation with Scripture.

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