

The Temptation of Eve

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Introduction

The Christian life is one of warfare. There is the struggle with the flesh (cf. Rom. 7:14-25) and there are temptations that arise throughout life. Given the fact that Christians endure one temptation after another, and, given the fact that history is littered with people and denominations that have succumbed to the lies of Satan and have totally apostatized, one should try to understand Satan's methodology of deception.

Probably the best place to examine Satan's tactic and methodology of temptation is the temptation of Eve in Genesis 3:1-6: "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die."' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

As Christians there are two primary topics that we should consider in this portion of Scripture. *First*, there is Satan's method of temptation. *Second*, there is Eve's unbiblical response toward Satan's attack.

Because the creation and temptation narratives in the first chapters of Genesis have been attacked and regarded as mythology by modernist, neo-orthodox, and neo-evangelical scholars, it is necessary to point out (before the examination of this passage) that this portion of Scripture is *not* poetic metaphor, myth, or legend but rather is an account of a real, literal, historical event. Berkhof notes that "all these [liberal, figurative and allegorical renderings] and similar interpretations are untenable in the light of Scripture. The passages preceding and following Gen. 3:1-7 are evidently intended as a plain historical narrative. That they were so understood by the biblical authors, can be proved by many cross-references, such as Job 31:33; Eccl.7:29; Isa. 43:27; Hos. 6:7; Rom. 5:12, 18, 19; 2 Cor. 11:8-9; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14, and therefore we have no right to hold that these verses, which form an integral part of the narrative, should be interpreted figuratively."¹ The whole Bible presupposes a literal six-day creation, Adam and Eve and space-time fall. To deny a literal, historic interpretation of the first chapters of Genesis is to deny the Bible's teaching on: the federal headship of Adam, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, monogamous heterosexual marriage, the submission of the wife to her husband, and so on. This passage of Scripture is clearly

¹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), p. 224.

meant to be taken literally. In Genesis 3:14, God curses the snake. God does not curse myths, metaphors or abstractions, but real historical creatures.

Satan's Method of Attack

In society there are (generally speaking) two types of criminals. The amateurish, haphazard, violent street thugs are low on intelligence and preparation. The highly intelligent are polished, professional thieves and hit men. When one carefully examines Satan's method of tempting Eve, one must place Satan in the latter category. Satan's attack indicates careful planning, premeditation, intelligence and cunning. One can see this cunning not only in the arguments that Satan used but also in his careful use of the circumstances surrounding the temptation.

There are a number of circumstances involved in the temptation that indicate that Satan chose the most opportune time, place and person upon which to make his attack. First, note that Satan approached the woman—Eve—and not Adam. The apostle Peter says that the woman is the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7). What exactly Peter means by the word weaker is not elaborated upon. It is obvious from other portions of Scripture that women are not inferior to men either morally or spiritually. That women are weaker than men physically is readily admitted by all except the most radical of feminists. It is indeed probable that Peter has more in mind than simply physical strength. In the post-fall world women are seen as more easily manipulated by emotional appeals. This fact has been successfully taken advantage of by politicians, advertisers, cults and womanizers. There is something intrinsic to the nature of women which makes them more approachable and unfortunately often more easily manipulated.

When the apostle Paul discusses the role of women in the church he makes it very clear that women are not to teach or “have authority over a man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:12). He then gives two reasons for this teaching. The first reason is that Adam was formed first and then Eve (v. 13). In other words Eve was created second as a helpmeet to Adam. God in this particular order of creation (according to both the Genesis narrative and the New Testament) was giving clear testimony to the headship of the man (the husband) over the woman (the wife). Then Paul gives the second reason: “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Tim. 2:14). Paul's statement reflects the account in Genesis. In Genesis 3:13, Eve admits to God: “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” Adam on the other hand was not directly deceived, but followed the example of Eve: “The woman You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Gen. 3:12).

What this all indicates is a careful strategy on Satan's part. First, as noted above, he directs his attack upon the weaker vessel. Eve's constitution which, although not inferior to Adam's, was created for a submissive, nurturing role, made her a more suitable target. Fairbairn writes, “Her very excellences in other respects—excellences connected with the finer sensibilities and stronger impulses of her emotional and loving nature—tend in a measure to disqualify her here. . . . Eve, affecting to play the master, and to decide the question for herself and her husband, soon gave proof of her incompetency;

she was overreached by a subtler intellect than her own, and induced under specious pretext, to prefer an apparent to the real good.”²

Second, Satan did not approach Adam directly but used Eve as his tool to cause Adam the leader, the covenant head, to fall. Satan wanted a role reversal in God’s ordained order of authority. By approaching Eve and deceiving her he placed her in the role of leader, the decision maker, the head of the family. The goal (which was successful) was to make Adam the follower, the submitter. Who would Adam be more likely to follow: a serpent, or his beautiful wife whom he loved and adored? Thus, the Scripture says that “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). “He is everywhere represented as the deceiver, assuming false guises, and making false representations.”³ Satan tempted Christ directly in the wilderness (cf. Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lu. 4:1-2) and failed. Satan then used a more subtle indirect approach when he tempted Christ through one of His closest friends, Peter (cf. Mt. 1:22). Note that in rebuking Peter Jesus used the same words he used to rebuke Satan in the wilderness. “Get behind Me, Satan!” (Mt. 16:23). Eve listened to the voice of the serpent instead of God; then Adam listened to the voice of his wife instead of God.

Christians must always be on their guard against temptations which come from loved ones, spouses, relatives, and close friends, for often these types of temptations are the stealthiest and hardest to resist. Poison is more readily accepted from the cup of a friend than an enemy. This truth is one reason why the Bible emphasizes that we are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14-18). History is full of examples of people who followed the unbiblical, ungodly advice of spouses, friends and family and thus came to judgment and ruin. Believers must submit every thought, suggestion and bit of advice to the authority of God’s word. Is it not better to reject the unbiblical advice of a friend or loved one than offend a thrice holy God?

Third, Satan approached Eve when she was near the tree. Verse six says that Eve saw that the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes. Where Eve was standing she could see the fruit. Note, that Satan attacks when he can take full advantage of the lust of the eyes. Also, he attacks near the tree in order to cause her to eat of the fruit quickly once her mind is deceived. Satan acts as a slick door-to-door salesman. By making his case near the tree, Eve can move from evil thought to evil deed without having time to reconsider her decision. Satan does not want her to have time to change her mind or have second thoughts.

Christians should never place themselves in a situation in which they know that they will be tempted. A person who is a glutton should not go to a buffet for dinner. Likewise, a person who is tempted to get drunk should not stop at the bar after work to shoot a game of pool. Men who have problem with lust should stay far away from magazine racks in bookstores and so on. Paul says “Do not give the devil an opportunity” (Eph. 4:27). How are Christians to avoid giving the devil an opportunity? Paul says, “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Eph. 4:26). Believers are to deal with anger immediately, on the very day it happens so that Satan cannot exploit the situation and tempt the Christian to sin. The devil uses anger (figuratively

² Patrick Fairbairn, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956 [1874]), pp. 129-130.

³ Charles Hodge, *I and II Corinthians* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974 [1857, 59]), p. 640.

speaking) as a fulcrum to beatings, murder, war, adultery, gossip and all sorts of revenge. How are married Christians to avoid sexual temptation? Paul writes, “Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Cor. 7:5). Staying away from situations of temptation is both positive and negative. Negatively, believers are to avoid certain situations and environments. Positively, Christians are to engage in lawful activities and exercises to tame the flesh.

Fourth, Satan did not show himself openly to the woman, but made use of a snake. Keep in mind that before the fall snakes were not regarded with fear and disgust as they now are among women. Prior to the fall the snake was a good and beautiful creature not associated with evil. The snake used by Satan may have been multicolored and very pleasing to the senses. The narrative states that the snake was more cunning than any beast of the field (vs. 1). The snake was cunning, crafty and shrewd. Satan picked a creature that corresponds to his own nature. Satan appears as an angel of light. He uses cunning, deceit and stealth to deceive mankind. Likewise, snakes do not boldly, openly attack their prey but use subtlety, stealth, and camouflage to deceive their prey. When a snake’s prey is aware of its presence, it is usually too late.

Fifth, did Satan approach Eve when she was alone or was Adam standing by her side during the whole dialogue? The biblical account does not really answer that question. However, the end of verse six does teach that Adam was present when Eve ate the fruit: “She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” If Adam was present during the whole dialogue between Satan and his wife, yet remained silent the whole time, then Adam was incredibly negligent as the leader of the family. Following Eve’s evil example was a wicked abdication of his God ordained role as the covenant head. If Adam was not present during the temptation but approached Eve at the end of the dialogue or was approached by Eve, this would indicate that Satan attacked Eve when she was alone without the protection of her husband. Note, it is often easier to deceive one person than two. For example, cults are notorious for isolating people from their family and friends. People who claim to be Christians yet isolate themselves from the body of Christ are hypocrites who have set themselves in harm’s way. “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in a multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. 11:14).

The Temptation Itself

Having noted that Satan’s plan of attack was premeditated and brilliantly executed, one must also consider the temptation itself. Satan’s goal was to draw Adam and Eve into sin in order to separate them and their posterity from God. Satan could not strike at God directly so he did what he considered to be the next best thing: he struck at man, God’s image and friend. Before the fall the whole human race had but one head (Adam) and at that Satan struck. Note, that Satan’s use of deception is progressive. He will move from indirect implication to a direct attack on God’s word, character and motive.

1. Satan began the temptation with what appeared to be an innocent question. “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1). Satan approached Eve in an apparently friendly manner. His question implied that he was

concerned about her welfare. Satan sought to draw Eve into a dialogue on his terms. The question was very subtle and clever. The Hebrew could be paraphrased as: “Is it really true that God has prohibited you from eating of all the trees of the garden?”

By phrasing the question in this manner Satan had divorced the original prohibition from its context and had given it a false emphasis. When God gave the prohibition it was at the end of a statement of generosity and kindness toward Adam. “And the Lord God commanded the man saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in that day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” (Gen. 2:16-17). God first emphasized the bounty. Satan only focuses on the prohibition. By centering Eve’s attention on the prohibition while purposely ignoring God’s gift of abundance, Satan is implying that God’s prohibition is unreasonable. While putting on the mask of sincerity, friendliness and concern, Satan sought to plant the seed of doubt in Eve’s heart against God’s Word—His command.

Also, Satan sought to depersonalize God and place Adam and Eve’s loving personal relationship to God in the background. If one reads the early chapters of Genesis one will find God’s covenant name *Yahweh* or *Jehovah* is continually used in the narrative. However, when Satan spoke to Eve he only used the term *Elohim*. “[I]n describing God simply as God [*elohim*] instead of as Lord God, which is characteristic of the rest of Gen. 2-3, there is a suggestion of the serpent’s distance from God. God is just the remote creator, not Yahweh...”⁴ One of the tactics that Satan uses to get people to sin is to portray God as an impersonal abstraction. When people do not think of God as a personal covenant God who judges sin and rebellion, they lose all fear of divine retribution. Most people in America today profess to believe in God but their god is not Yahweh but a remote absentee landlord.

Although on the surface Satan’s question appears quite innocent it implies that man has the authority to place God in the dock and judge His law-word. “Has God forbidden you to eat from all the trees? Really! Can it possibly be true?” Satan wanted Eve to think that God’s command was unreasonable and unfair. Satan’s tactic has been used by humanists for centuries. God’s word is said to be irrational, ludicrous, unfair and evil. People who believe such lies, ethically become wild beasts.

2. Satan in the first phase of the temptation seeks to gain Eve’s trust with what appears to be an innocent question of concern. The first phase is subtle and indirect. While pretending to be compassionate and friendly toward Eve, Satan is actually just putting on a front in order to place a seed of doubt in her heart. After accomplishing the first phase of his attack Satan goes straight for the jugular. Having gained Eve’s attention and trust he delivers the knock-out blow. Satan directly and emphatically denies God’s word. “Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die’” (Gen. 3:4). In the original language the negative comes first and receives all the emphasis: “NO! It is not true that you will surely die.” The Hebrew could be paraphrased: “No way, you will positively not die!”

There are a number of things that should be noted regarding Satan’s statement. First, Satan is clearly telling Eve that God is a liar, that His word cannot be trusted. There is no neutrality in Satan’s statement. “Eve I really care about you so I want you to know

⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), p. 73.

that God is a rotten liar. You must decide between my word and God's lie." Second, note that the first doctrines denied in history are the infallibility of God's word and God's judgment. The best way to get people to rebel against God's word is first to get them to disbelieve it, then get them to believe it is false, unloving and wicked. If one listens to the manner in which theological liberals, secular humanists, militant homosexuals and radical feminists speak about God's word one can hear Satan's children mimicking Satan's word. They teach that the Bible is a myth, a lie. It is nothing more than a redaction of wicked, conniving, power hungry priests. God's so-called commandments, statutes and judgments are evil, repressive, sexist, homophobic and so on. Disbelief and distrust of God's word is the starting point of all sin and rebellion. Why did the Israelites disobey and rebel against God in the wilderness? The author of Hebrews says it was "because of unbelief" (3:19). Thus all Christians are warned, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). To believe in God and the Lord Jesus Christ means first and foremost to believe in the Bible. To say (as many people do today) that they believe in Jesus Christ while rejecting His commandments and rejecting what God's word teaches regarding Him is a gross delusion. It is akin to saying I love Jesus Christ while spitting in His face and calling Him a liar. This blasphemous delusion is what theological liberalism is all about.

Satan also denied that sin results in judgment. "Look Eve, God lied to you. His word cannot be trusted. You're not going to die." If people believe that they can lie, steal, fornicate, commit adultery, get drunk, commit murder and so on with absolutely no negative consequences from God, then people will sin with boldness. Satan denied God's negative sanctions in history and in the hereafter. When the infallibility of God's word is denied what is usually the first doctrine to be jettisoned? It is the doctrine of hell. Unitarians, modernists and even many so-called neo-evangelicals turn to universalism. Many others argue for annihilationism. Satan wanted Adam and Eve to think and act autonomously. Therefore, he not only denied God's word but also sought to remove the fear of God. God, then, is not only a liar, but He is also powerless; He will not punish sin.

Satan's tactic of explicitly denying God's word and judgment has been very successful. In the first half of the twentieth century the large Protestant denominations fell like dominos. Satan first captured the colleges and seminaries, then the pastors and their churches. Among fundamentalists and evangelicals Satan has taken a different approach with the same principles. Satan's word to the fundamentalists has been, "Yes, of course the Bible is the infallible word of God. However, most of it doesn't apply to you for the law and all the prophecies concerning God's people only apply to the nation of Israel." While formally accepting the infallibility of Scripture, Satan has cleverly discarded most of the Bible as irrelevant for the individual, the church and society. Also, Satan does not explicitly deny God's judgment or the doctrine of hell with fundamentalists. Instead he takes a more subtle approach. "Hell is a really bad place. You don't want to go there. Accept Christ as your personal savior and everything will be fine. Oh, by the way don't worry about repentance you can accept Him as your savior now and continue to sin and have fun; then, if you feel like it you can accept Him as Lord down the road. Go ahead and sin. God will forgive you. Relax, have a good time." Has this tactic been successful? Yes, evangelical churches are full of unregenerate ("Christ is a fire escape from hell") hypocrites.

Satan's statement to Eve also reveals that he is the father of what has been called the new morality, situation ethics and relativistic ethics. Satan told Eve that there is no such thing as ethical absolutes. Satan said, "Look Eve you need to step back and assess the situation and decide for yourself what to do." In other words truth, meaning and ethics can only be determined autonomously apart from God's word. Satan taught Eve that one must reject any idea of an authoritative divine revelation in order to have a fulfilling life. One must reject ethical absolutes if one wants to experience life to the fullest. Satan's great lie is that the opposite of God's law is freedom; the opposite of obedience to God is blessing.

3. After telling Eve that God is a liar, that sin will not result in death, Satan next explains why God has lied and why Eve will not die. "For God knows that in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (v. 5). Satan told Eve that God lied because he does not want her to have the wonderful blessing that attends the eating of the forbidden fruit. His statement to Eve clearly implies that an evil motive lies behind God's command. Satan told Eve that God is selfish; that He is not really concerned for her welfare. "Eve, the reason God told you not to eat the fruit is *not* because eating it will cause you to die. The real reason is that God is selfish. He doesn't want you to be like Him."

All of Satan's argumentation leads straight to the bait: "the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil" (v. 5). Note once again Satan's carefully designed argumentation. Note the brilliant progression of deception. First, Satan asks an outwardly friendly question to show his concern, to gain Eve's trust all the while planting the seed of doubt in her heart. Second, Satan calls God a liar and then explicitly denies God's judgment for disobedience. Third, Satan attacks God's motive by implying that God is selfish and unconcerned for Eve's welfare. Then, last of all Satan sets before Eve the bait, the price, and the reward.

There are four things that should be noted regarding Satan's offer to Eve. First, Satan offered Eve instant gratification: "The *day* you eat of it your eyes will be opened" (v. 5). God in the covenant of works had promised eternal life and glorification to Adam if he was obedient to God's word. This covenant required sacrifice and obedience in the present in order to receive a reward in the future. If Adam and Eve were obedient, then at a God-ordained time Jehovah would have bestowed upon Adam and Eve eternal life and glorification. They would still be finite creatures but all possibility of a future fall into sin would have been forever removed by God. They could have partaken of the sealing ordinance by eating from the tree of life. God was in sovereign control of the bestowal of eternal life and glorification.

Note the satanic philosophy regarding receiving a blessing. Satan taught that the blessing did not come from God. The reward existed independently of God's power and determination. Therefore, Satan rejected the biblical teaching regarding trust in God, obedience to His word, and patient submission to His providence. Satan taught that Eve should grasp the blessing immediately through her own power. The idea that the fruit could bless apart from God is a belief in magic. It is witchcraft and sorcery. "Look, Eve, you are in control of the blessing and not God. You can have your eyes opened and be like God this very day." The whole idea of obtaining instant gratification by disobeying God's law is the fundamental philosophy of the criminal mind. Paul wrote against this satanic thinking: God "will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to

those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath...” (Rom. 2:7-8).

Second, Satan told Eve that her eyes would be opened. “Eve, don’t be so limited in your knowledge, understanding and perception. Here is an opportunity to expand your consciousness. Why should you be content with your puny, finite creaturely perception and knowledge when you can have so much more just by eating the fruit?”

Third, Satan then told Eve why her eyes would be opened: “You will be like God.” Satan told Eve that the path to dominion and blessing is not through obedience to God and His law-word, but through going beyond her creatureliness and finiteness. According to Satan man is not to concern himself with obedience, submission or ethics but with metaphysics or being. Isaiah 14:14 says that Satan fell because he wanted to be like the most High. He set before Eve the same blasphemous notion. “Eve, if you eat the fruit you will be like God. You will be all knowing. You will have equality with God. You will no longer be dependent upon Him for meaning, ethics and truth. You will be self-sufficient. If you eat the fruit you will be sovereign. Then you and not God can call the shots.” Satan did not want man to obey God but to become god—determining for himself reality, meaning and ethics. This satanic philosophy lies behind all rebellion. It is the foundational philosophy of sorcery, secular humanism and new age mysticism.

Fourth, Satan told Eve that if she becomes like God, then she will know good and evil. Although the Hebrew verb *to know* has both an intellectual as well as experiential aspect (e.g., Gen 4:1); and, although the phrase “to know good and evil” was used in ancient Egypt as a synonym for comprehensive knowledge, the context of Satan’s statement indicates that what he had in mind was primarily determinative knowledge. Adam and Eve will be like God because they will define or determine for themselves what is good and what is evil. This interpretation is confirmed by Genesis 3:22: “Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.’”

Eve, following Satan’s lead, presupposed that she lived in an impersonal non-determined environment. She accepted Satan’s premise that God’s word could not be trusted and that therefore the only reliable method for achieving truth and knowledge was human autonomy. Eve would have to seek epistemological independence from her creator. Once she accepted all these satanic presuppositions, eating the fruit to be like God in order to determine for herself good and evil was but a small step, for she had already eaten the fruit in her heart. Note, sin always begins in the heart or mind. James said: “each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. “Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (1:14-15).

Satanic Principles

Before discussing Eve’s unbiblical response to Satan’s temptation one should briefly examine the satanic worldview. Satan’s temptation of Eve serves as a paradigm for all subsequent methods of temptation. If Christians are familiar with Satan’s philosophy they will be able to recognize the voice of Satan as he speaks through his children throughout history.

1. The Bible is full of lies. It is myth and legend. It is *not* God's inspired-infallible revelation to man. Rather, it is an unreliable, uninspired, inaccurate, sub-historical record of the evolution of the people of Israel.

2. The word of God is vague, unclear and ambiguous. Therefore no one can really know and understand what God has said. Everyone has their own personal, subjective opinion regarding the Bible's teaching; therefore, no one really knows the truth.

3. The God of the Bible and the Bible itself is evil. God's laws are unfair, unjust, harsh and mean. The Bible is anti-environmental, racist, sexist, homophobic, anti-egalitarian and so on.

4. Man can only achieve truth, wisdom and knowledge by forsaking God's word and discovering truth autonomously. Beelzebub 6:16 says, "Lean not upon the Lord God and His word but trust in yourself with all your heart."

5. Freedom and blessing comes through casting off God's law-word. Breaking God's law leads to great blessings and rewards. Regeneration flows from chaos. Salvation and peace is attained through lawlessness.

6. The path to power and success is *not* through humble submission to God and His word. It is only attained by creating your own law. You must become your own God and determine for yourself what is good and evil, right and wrong. Sin-mantra 3:36 says, "I did it *my* way."

7. Man's problem is not ethical but metaphysical. Man should not try to obey God, but to become God. There is no creator-creature distinction. Everything exists in an impersonal environment. Everything is on the same scale of being. Get off your rear end and move up the scale.

8. Man deserves godhood, blessings, power, enlightenment and salvation by right and not by grace. Don't ask for mercy—take what is yours! (The biblical doctrine that says God sovereignly gives grace and salvation to whomever He wills is anathema to Satan and his followers. Satan is the father of entitlements.)

9. Sin and rebellion against God does not lead to judgment either in history or the hereafter. "Don't deprive yourself of the fun things of life because of the stupid, fictional, outmoded concept of judgment and hell." (Satan was the first universalist. His slogans are popular with the youth culture today: Don't fear the reaper, no fear, if it feels good do it, sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, etc.).

Believers who have knowledge of Satan's worldview should not be surprised to find that Satan's children reflect his doctrine in their thinking, speech and life. Christians are to reject all such satanic thinking and are to think God's thoughts after Him. Biblical doctrine should be the foundation of all our thinking, speaking and behavior. "For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light" (Ps. 36:9).

Eve's Response

Although Satan's temptation of Eve was very cunning and deceptive he did not force Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve cooperated with the devil and allowed him to lead her into sin. All believers should carefully note and understand what Eve did that led her into transgression. There are a number of things that Eve did that all Christians should avoid.

1. Eve engaged herself in a dialogue with the enemy (Satan) on his terms. Satan directed the subject matter and controlled the direction of the conversation. Eve allowed herself to be taken into ungodly territory. The serpent said, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die”” (Gen. 3:1-3). Eve is approached by a snake that talks and questions God’s word. Since Eve was under the authority of Adam she should have immediately consulted her husband when confronted by such unsavory circumstances. Whenever Christians are confronted by a situation that is even questionable the best thing to do is step back and seek the counsel of the Scriptures and other believers.

A number of commentators believe that Eve in her first response to the serpent was guilty of exaggerating God’s original command by saying: “nor shall you touch it.” If true, this would indicate that possibly Eve was already considering God’s command as too harsh and restrictive. Other commentators, however, warn that since the Hebrew word for *touch* can mean “to touch so as to partake,” one should be careful not to read too much into Eve’s statement.

2. Eve set herself up as the ultimate authority in the interpretation of reality. “Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:4-6). When Satan told Eve that God had lied, that she would not die, he clearly was contradicting what God had said. The moment that Satan called God a liar, Eve should have rebuked him with a “get thee hence Satan.” But, instead she committed herself to a position of independence, a position of autonomy from God and His word. She decided to examine what God had said and what Satan had said and then make a decision. Eve took God’s word and Satan’s word and placed them on the same level. She believed that she should be the ultimate authority and judge between them.

Note, that in autonomously determining whether or not it was ethical to eat the forbidden fruit, Eve acted as both an empiricist and a rationalist. How did Eve act as an empiricist? Instead of trusting in God’s authoritative word she decided to study the tree. She looked at the tree; she noted that it was good for food, and pleasant to look at. Eve interpreted the information she gathered with her senses. She decided based on this information that the tree was desirable to make one wise. She had already rejected God’s word and had assumed that she existed in an impersonal, non-determined environment. Eve believed that the only method for obtaining truth was to go on a fact gathering mission.

Eve was a rationalist because she believed that reason could discover truth and accurately determine reality apart from God’s word. Adam and Eve were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and thus were different from the brute beasts. They were given the ability to use reason and logic. Man’s ability to reason is essential in his task of dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26). Logic is essential for communication, math, philosophy, theology, science and so on. However, human reason was never meant to be used independent from God’s special revelation. Man was given reasoning capabilities in

order: to commune with God, to understand God's word, to carry out God's commandments and to obediently create a God-loving civilization throughout the earth. Using human reason apart from God's word and to judge it is a denial of our total dependence upon God and His revelation for truth, knowledge, meaning and ethics. Before the fall, God had direct communication with Adam and Eve in the garden. God's commandment to Adam was to be obeyed solely on the basis of God's authority. Rushdoony writes, "Without the infallible and authoritative voice of God, man can hear no voice but his own; he has no course save relativism and nihilism. No law of contradiction and no universal can survive in a world wherein God does not first of all speak with authority. History becomes real only because the Scriptures are true and the God of the Scriptures absolutely governs and predestines all things. Man lives in a created world of created things and created acts. His life, therefore, is lived in a personalistic universe where he meets God everywhere, because every fact is a God-given, God-determined and God-interpreted fact. His life and history are therefore meaningful and he is rescued from nihilism precisely because God is self-sufficient and sovereign and speaks authoritatively and gives man the meaning and interpretation of life."⁵ For a man to place God in the dock and stand as judge over His word is proof that man has already abandoned God and His word for autonomy, for self-law. The Bible says: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Pr. 1:7). "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding" (Pr. 3:5). "[I]n Your light we see light" (Ps 36:9). Reason used apart from God is constantly used to rationalize sin. Sin however is never rational.

3. Eve coveted that which was unlawful. She lusted after the forbidden fruit. She stared at the fruit and contemplated how she would benefit from eating it. A great deal of sin begins with the lust of the eyes: adultery, fornication, theft, rape, kidnapping and so on. There is the example of Achan: "When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them" (Josh 7:21). David also was guilty of lusting with his eyes: "Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman" (2 Sam 11:2). The apostle John warned believers not to love the world by saying: "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 Jn. 2:16). Plummer writes, "The eyes are the chief channel between the flesh and the outside world; and 'the lust of the eyes' is the desire of seeing unlawful sights for the sake of the sinful pleasure to be derived from the sight; idle and prurient curiosity."⁶ What Eve, Achan and David were all guilty of was staring at what they knew was sinful and off-limits and contemplating the pleasures of sin in the mind. Staring at the forbidden fruit and toying with sin in the mind is spiritual suicide. When you are on a diet, you do not go into a donut shop and stare at the donuts and fantasize about them.

4. Eve was guilty of sinful pride. Eve's decision to determine for herself what was right and what was wrong was rooted in pride. It was the height of pride and arrogance to think that she—a finite creature—could be like the Almighty. "Pride goes before the

⁵ R. J. Rushdoony, *By What Standard?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1965), pp. 138-139.

⁶ Alfred Plummer, *The Epistle of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980 [1886]), p. 52.

destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Pr. 16:18). Eve was full of pride when she decided that she deserved the fruit and the supposed blessings that it contained. The same type of pride lies behind all flagrant sin. When people openly rebel against God’s word, they are essentially saying: “God, I’m not going to follow what You have said for I know a better way to go;” or “I don’t care what Your word says, I’m going to call the shots.” All such thinking is rooted in self-glorification and not the glorification of God. Eve was not seeking how to love and please her Creator but rather was acting for what she perceived to be her own self-interest. Jesus taught us to have a totally different, biblical attitude: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Mt. 6:33).

5. Eve’s decision to forsake God’s word and do her own thing involved unbelief. Eve knew God’s word. She clearly had an understanding of God’s prohibition. Her problem was not a lack of understanding but a lack of trust. Eve did not believe God’s word. She did not have faith in God. If Eve had really believed God’s word, she would not have placed it on the same level as Satan’s word. She would not have subjected it to her autonomous reason. Eve would have obeyed it without question. The Bible emphasizes the relationship between faith and obedience. “He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 Jn. 2:4). “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?” (Jas. 2:17-20)

Unbelief and disobedience go hand in hand. Unbelief is the fountain from which springs all sin and rebellion. This was true of Eve in the garden, Cain in the field and apostate Israel in the wilderness. A person’s behavior reveals His belief or unbelief. Action always follows the mind or heart. A sincere Christian does not disbelieve God’s word. He doesn’t attempt to refute it for the sake of sinful pleasure. The mark of a true believer is prompt and sincere obedience to all of God’s commandments. “We really show what we are by what we do; we reveal our doctrine in our practice...”⁷ “To walk in the light is above all to believe the light, the truth, and then also to obey it in word and in deed.”⁸

Conclusion

Satan’s careful planning and cunning deception coupled with Eve’s willingness to listen and then cooperate with this deception was a disaster for mankind, for: “Eve took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her and he ate” (Gen. 3:6). Satan did not take the fruit and put it in Eve’s mouth. He can tempt but he cannot force. Adam and Eve were totally responsible for their actions. “But each one is tempted when he is

⁷ Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Fellowship with God: Studies in 1 John* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 1:117.

⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1966), p. 388.

drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (Jas. 1:14-15).

Although Adam and Eve failed miserably by eating the fruit and thus cast the human race into sin, death and misery, Jesus Christ (the second Adam, the covenant head of His people) suffered a massive assault of Satan under the severest circumstances yet emerged the victor. Eve was tempted in lush paradise. Christ was tempted in a harsh, barren wilderness. Eve was surrounded with the choicest of fruits, nuts, grain and vegetables. She had food and pure water in abundance. Jesus was tempted after fasting for forty days. He was afflicted with hunger pains. Eve, following Satan's lead, abandoned God's word (His command) for human autonomy and self-law. Jesus our perfect and beloved example said: "It is written!" "It is written!" "It is written!" When temptation arises the Scripture must be in our hearts and on our lips. "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O Lord! Teach me Your statutes" (Ps. 119:11-12).

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