



# Lesson 1

## *A Heart Attack* *Genesis 3*

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*Adam and Eve are vulnerable and Satan is vile.*

### Summary

The Bible establishes in the record of the fall in Genesis 3, where the real battle to obey God is located. There will be external temptations. They will be presented through the body (eyes, ears, etc.). They will come into the heart, the inner man, where beliefs and wants flow in words. Out of the words of the heart, the Word of God is believed or denied resulting in sin.

TEACHER: Use an illustration about a heart attack. Highlight its suddenness, dangerousness and deadliness. Connect to the text, for here we have the first heart attack.

### **The Commencement of Sin (v.1-7)**

The shift from the innocence of the Adam and Eve to the crafty serpent marks an ominous turn in the story. It is carried by the s o u n d of the similarities of the Hebrew words for “naked” and for “crafty”. Adam and Eve are vulnerable and Satan is vile.

### **The P e r s o n of the Tempter (v.1)**

The serpent is introduced with attributes that are more than animal. This is a particular serpent. Here is deceit and evil craftiness as the embodiment of evil. Here is someone in the snake. The serpent, not just as a part of the animal creation, but as a part of the rebellious and fallen heavenly hosts, is an ever growing menace through the Scriptures. So while a talking snake sounds fairytale like, it tells us two very important things.

### **There is more going on here than just an animal tempting Eve.**

There is a malevolent intelligence, an evil presence who uses the snake as his tool. The serpent here is not to be equated with modern, crawling reptiles. What we see today is the product of the curse. The clear implication here is that the serpent had legs, a dragon beautiful and superbly intelligent. Eve does not see the serpent as either strange or sinister.

### Satan never appears as he is.

He is always parading as something or someone else. He even pretends to be an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) when he is in fact a fallen cherub and full of darkness and deceit (Ezekiel 28:14, 16).

### Here is the introduction of competing voices.

God's Word and counsel have been the sole guide for Adam and Eve. Their world is not only made by God, but their understanding of that world is entirely shaped by God. Since one of the persons of the Godhead is Word, Satan attacks humans by perverting and twisting what was to be their life and substitutes his own dark lies. This is what we face today. Even though we have the grand clarity and sufficiency of the Word of God, we can be overwhelmed with a cacophony of compelling, but corrupt counsel.

## **The Presentation of the Temptation (v.2-6)**

In these verses, Moses establishes a clear understanding of how sin functions. Notice that Satan tempts Eve through the way God has made her soul to function. There is no sin nature driving this or being appealed to. This is temptation aimed squarely at her heart, at how it believes and wants.

### Through L i e s Directed at the Heart B e l i e f s (v.2-5)

The temptation is first presented directly through lies aimed at the part of Eve's soul which knows and believes.

#### *Satan Q u e s t i o n s God's Word (v.1)*

He undermines its accuracy and authority The questioning is two-fold.

- ◇ Is the Word she has a c c u r a t e?

Did God actually say it? Is Eve really sure that what she believes is what God said? Is the Word she has, *ACCURATE*? The question intends to shake Eve's confidence in what Adam has taught and told her. Is the voice of counsel she has been following really telling her the way it is?

- ◇ Is the Word she has a u t h o r i t a t i v e?

Are you, Eve, included in this prohibition (due to the plural pronoun)? Was this prohibition for Adam only so that she is exempted? Is the Word she has, *AUTHORITATIVE*? The question may be including Adam's standing by in the plural. It also may be insinuating that while the command was given to Adam, it may be good for him, but not Eve.

This line of attack is used over and over again. We are challenged with whether we have the Word in our hands. We are often tempted to think that what it is saying isn't applicable to us. I hear this all the time in counseling through sentences like, "Well that is just your interpretation;" and "I don't think that text applies to my situation."



### *Eve C h a n g e s God's Word (v.2-3)*

She undermines its scope and sufficiency. Her quoting of God's Word here is inaccurate by both taking away and adding to. The affect is to change what she believes to be true about God.

- ◇ She leaves out “freely” and “all” thus making God less g r a c i o u s.
- ◇ She adds “neither touch it” thus making God more r e s t r i c t i v e.
- ◇ She leaves out “surely”, making God less serious about j u d g m e n t.

Note that she knows enough to respond to Satan with the Word of God. But she is not holding the line. She is not getting it right. She goes above the line by adding to the Word and below the line by taking away from the Word. Thank God for Jesus in the wilderness temptation who not only uses the Word of God to ward off temptation, but He gets it right and uses it right. Jesus holds the line when everyone else, including Eve and Adam here, fail.

### *Satan C h a l l e n g e s God's Word (v.4-5)*

He attacks God's integrity and intention. Satan now declares that what God has said is simply not true. He does not challenge the precept itself, only its punishment.

- ◇ He attacks God's i n t e g r i t y.

He effectively says that God has lied. It is simply not true that you will surely die.

- ◇ He attacks God's i n t e n t i o n.

He also imputes evil motives to God. God has given this command in order to keep you down, to keep you below Him and beneath Him.

Notice that this attack is aimed at what God knows and what God intends. His slander of God is framed by the God's own heart functions. God has not spoken the truth because God wants to preserve His unique deity and not grant equal status to anyone.

Here is the heart of Satan and the underlying sin in all sin. Satan wants to be equal with or just be God. And so do we. At the root of sin is self. At the root of self is the deceit and desire to be like God. In our desire to be like Him in idolatrous ways, we mar the very holy and righteous ways we are like Him as image bearers.

Do you see how these are lies and deceits aimed at getting Eve to agree with Satan and to believe what is not true so that she will act on them? This is part of why you do what you do. You believe certain things to be true and that belief causes actions (as well as emotions, affections).

### Through L u s t s Directed at the Heart W a n t s (v.6)

Now the temptation moves to present an attraction through lusts to the heart desires.

#### *Temptation appeals **through** a physical medium, s e e s.*

Most temptations are presented through the medium of the body. It is not that the body is evil, but that it is how the soul interacts with the world around it. Satan speaks, Eve hears. The tree is pointed to, Eve sees. Her heart is engaged with the temptation as enticement using the body.

Many temptations are to the misuse of legitimate things. There is nothing wrong with eating. But there is everything wrong with eating this fruit. Nothing is evil in and of itself. But almost everything has an evil misuse.

#### *Temptation appeals **to** the wants of the heart, d e s i r e s.*

She is driven by her craving, desires and wants. She is going to trade desiring all the rest of the food and fruit of the garden to desire the one fruit she is forbidden. If she does not desire it, she will not take it. But she reaches out following the flow of her desires to take and eat.

Her believing Satan's lie shapes the object of her desires. The tree is not truly desirable to make one wise, but it is what Satan has said. Her wants are directed to what is false, deceived by Satan's lies. They deceive her into thinking this is a greater pleasure than all the legitimate ones God has given. Prizing this fruit more than the others causes her to crave, to be mastered by her desire for her.

#### *Temptation appeals **in** t h e m a t i c heart elements.*

Notice that the fruit is delicious, delightful and desirable. It is good to eat. It is lovely and beautiful. It will bring me something I do not have now. The thematic heart elements have at their core pleasures and promises. Temptations hold out to the desires phony pleasures and false promises. Can you see in your own temptations how they appeal by presenting to you some sort of pleasure or promising you something desirable? Can you see how often they are substitutes for the true pleasures and promises God holds out for us?

Now, be clear on this: desiring is simply a function of the heart. It is not possible to "not want". But those wants, desires and cravings are to be shaped by truth and submitted to God. Now we watch what Eve believes linked with what Eve sees turn her desires against her to crave what God has forbidden. In the midst of sin, an important question is, "What did you want?"



I want you to see some important implications here:

- ◇ Your wants are shaped by what you b e l i e v e t o b e t r u e .

Notice the movement here. Satan must first change what she believes before her wants begin to master her. This is why faith, knowledge and wisdom are the most essential ingredients for holiness.

- ◇ Your wants and desires are carried about in w o r d s .

You want in words. We know what we want through the words that express and carry those wants.

- ◇ You are responsible to c o n t r o l and to c h a n g e your wants.

You are not at the mercy of the pull of vague, inward tuggings called wants. Your wants are your responsibility. We will be looking at this more in depth later when we study James 1 and 1 John 2:15-17.