

Help! I've Fallen And I Can't Get Up!

Long Beach Alliance Church • March 26th, 2006 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**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; AND SHE GAVE ALSO TO HER HUSBAND WITH HER, AND HE ATE.
~GENESIS 3:6 (NASB)**

1) The Crafty Serpent

- A) Originally, the serpent was an animal who could walk (in an upright position?), and could communicate verbally with humans, despite being an animal (Genesis 3:1)

- B) The woman (she is not named Eve until 3:20) probably had little understanding of Satan* as a personal being, and obviously, her nature was not one which was prone to sin.

* It is highly doubtful that Eve had an understanding of a personal being named Satan who had the ability to influence the serpent. However, because of clear statements

- C) The serpent's "crafty" nature and Satan's evil intent are revealed in his opening comment (3:1). In Hebrew, the question which the serpent poses is rhetorical and is more a comment of shock and surprise than genuine inquisitiveness.

2) A Temptation For Independence

- A) It should be noted that every instance of the serpent's usage of "you" ("you shall not eat," vss. 2-3; "you shall not touch lest you die," vs. 3; "you will not die," v.4; "in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be... vs. 5) is plural (y'all). In other words, Adam is standing nearby, even as the serpent speaks with the woman.
- B) The woman corrects the serpent, but also "reads into" the command a bit of information (prohibiting touching the fruit) which was not part of the original form of Genesis 2:16-17 (3:2-3). In fact, the construction of the woman's response (a misquote) is the actual statement to which the serpent responds (3:4).
- C) The serpent's reply is abrupt, emphatic, and dogmatic. "You surely will not die!" (3:4). He then backs up his claim with what appears to be 'special knowledge' of God that will result in blessings rather than death (3:5).

* in the NT (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9, 20:2) we have every right to say that Eve was tempted by the devil. The evil thoughts which issued from the mouth of an actual serpent found their origin in the devil himself. In some sense that we cannot understand, for God has not revealed it to us, the snake was an instrument used of the devil. To attempt to explain how the devil employed the snake is a task of which we are not capable, nor is it particularly profitable that we should know how this was done, however, the data of the Bible compels us to believe. We are far from saying that Eve herself understood this when the words issued from the serpent's mouth, even Moses, the writer of Genesis, may not have had the full knowledge of the subject that is possessed by NT believers. Excerpt from *Genesis 3: A Devotional and Expository Study* by Edward J. Young.

- D) The phrase "you will be like God" is the crux of the temptation from the serpent to the woman (3:5). It represented independence and the opportunity to self-govern. It sounds like freedom, but it is actually only independence.

3) The Worst Moment In Human History

- A) The woman sees three commendable virtues in the fruit of the tree (3:6):
- It is physically appealing (good for food),
 - It is aesthetically pleasing (a delight to the eyes),
 - It is sapientially transforming (desirable to acquire wisdom) (P. Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*).
- B) It is the last aspect of the temptation that the text indicates is the most appealing. Eating the fruit would give the woman something she believed she did not possess, wisdom. Here is the essence of her sin, here is where she was fooled (1st Timothy 2:14).
- C) The woman, believing that possessing something which was eluding her would give her greater happiness, eats the fruit (3:6), and then gives the fruit to Adam, who also eats.
- D) The woman does not try to tempt Adam. Rather, Adam neither challenges or questions, he neither approved or rebuked what was happening. Hers is a sin of initiative, his is a sin of acquiescence. At that moment, everything changed forever (3:7).