

Temptation Genesis 3:1-6

Sunday 14th February 2010 Morning Service

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Genesis 3 sets the scene of the world as we know it. It begins with temptation and the story of temptation begins with the tempter.

I. The Tempter v.1

'Now the serpent...' v1 Without introduction the tempter appears. He is **a creature** among those 'the LORD God had made'. He was '**more crafty** than any other of the wild animals'. He was **evil**: from the beginning he speaks against God. Immediately many questions arise yet Genesis 3 gives so little explanation. The Bible does not answer all our questions but it does tell us all we need to know. Purpose of this passage is not to fully explain origins of evil but to show us how evil operates. There 2 crucial things here:

1) Real Event. This is not fable, legend, parable & myth. It is presented as fact & consistently treated as history in rest of Bible. Paul wrote in 2 Cor 11:3 'I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray'. A reason Paul gives in 1 Tim 2:14 that teaching responsibility is reserved to certain men only is 'Adam was not deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner'. If this was myth the apostle's argument evaporates. In Romans 5 Paul repeatedly puts two events side by side: the sin of Adam & sacrifice of Christ: (See Rom 5:15, 17, 19). 1 Cor 15:22 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive'. Adam and Christ correspond: if one is real, so is the other.

2) Real Force Of Evil. A real creature, the serpent, was taken hold of by an exterior, superior, supernatural, sinister, force of evil who is still present. Rev 12:9 says 'the great dragon was hurled down- that ancient serpent, called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray'. The New Testament is explicit about Satan's reality. See John 12:31 & 1 John 4:19. From references in Isaiah 14 & Ezekiel 28 we get suggestions of an angelic being of extraordinary beauty, made perfect, who rebelled against God & took with him other angels, now demons. He is doomed yet powerful & active on earth to destroy all that is good & all that God is doing. 2 dangers in regard to him: one is that we have an **exaggerated view** of Satan, become fascinated by him. The other danger is we have a **trivial view** of Satan. His reality hardly enters our calculations. If that happens we hardly need to pray. We no longer see the danger. We don't believe what Paul says in Ephesians 6. 'Our struggle is not against flesh & blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms'. The answer to Satan is to put on the full armour of God & v18, 'pray, always keep on praying for all the saints', v19 'pray for me also', v20 'pray'. Four commands to pray & keep on praying. The Lord's Prayer

ends, 'lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one'.

II. Temptation

1. Satan Subverts God's Order

'He (the serpent) said to the woman' v1.

Firstly, one of the creatures is leading the humans, contrary to 1:26 & 28.

Secondly, Satan attacks via the woman: v6 says 'her husband who was with her'. Yet he plays no part. 1 Tim 2:12-13 & 1 Cor 11:8 -9 identify from facts Adam made first before the woman, and the woman was made from the man & woman was made for man teaches that man is to be the head of the woman: not as superior to her but given responsibility for her. Yet Adam does not speak up when Satan tempts the woman & he says nothing to protect her. Adam was charged with the protection of the garden (2:15) from all threats & the protection of the woman from all dangers. Afterwards it is Adam God first speaks to in 3:9. The New Testament consistently holds Adam, as the head of the woman, as responsible. See Rom 5:12, 14, 15, 17 & 19. Satan infiltrates the marriage order, so the man follows the lead of the woman (see 3:17). So the man refuses to take responsibility & fails to be the head & protector of his wife.

2. Satan Attacks God's Word

The fundamental temptation to each of us is to doubt God's word.

1) He distorts God's Word. 'Did God really say You must not eat from any tree in the garden?' v2. Yet in fact totally false: see 2:16. God said the opposite. Satan invites the woman to stand in judgement over what God says. The woman runs with the seed thoughts that God is less generous & more restrictive than he really is. Satan has begun to undermine her happy confidence in what God says.

2) Contradicts God's Word v4 flat denial. Tells 2 complete lies. Jesus says of the devil: 'there is no truth in him. When he lies he speaks his native language, for he is a liar & the father of lies' John 8:44. He **lies about God's Word**: God told Adam that if they ate of that tree 'you will surely die' v17. But Satan says 'You will not surely die'. What happens? The moment they rebel something profound dies, their spiritual relationship with God. They hide from him. Then they will die physically, see the first genealogy in Gen 5. And beyond the physical death lies the second death, the final judgement of God. 2ndly **lies about God's character**: See v5 .

3) Suggests Benefits In Ignoring God's Word. Like the fisherman who puts the worm on hook. Firstly, '**You will be like God** knowing good and evil'. Inviting them to be their own god. The root of sin: I want to set myself up. Tragedy is that God had already made man in his likeness 1:26, but by this rebellion man & woman become less like God, not more like him. Experiencing sin was 'a useless & horrible knowledge'. Second, **attraction of the visible** v6 'when the woman saw that the fruit was good to eat & pleasing to the eye & desirable for gaining wisdom'. In her thoughts she is playing with sin. What we do before we act in sin, we think on sin. Why Jesus says 'Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man unclean'. Mt 15:19-20. 1 John 2:26 warns us of 'the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes'.

4) He Uses Us As His Agents In Rejecting God's Word. 'She took some & ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it'. v6 The woman who was made to be a

helper for man, became man's tempter. She 'took, ate & gave': v17 tells us Adam 'listened' (so she spoke as well) to his wife & ate. She failed to seek his counsel. And Adam failed to direct her to obedience. Beware not just that we don't sin but that we don't sin by leading others into sin.

God has the answer to this tragedy. You see first inkling of it in end v15. God has a day when the tempter will meet his match. We need to remember another temptation, when Jesus totally resisted Satan. And Jesus, the Sinless One, on the Cross bore the guilt of Adam & Eve's rebellion & all our rebellion & paid the penalty in our place. And He is our helper today will not let us down. Heb 4:15-16 tells us 'We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are- yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need'.