

THE SNAKE IN THE GARDEN

Genesis 3

Need: Sensitivity to the presence and the approaches of the Devil.

Proposition: The approaches of the devil are revealed in the serpent's approach to Eve in the Garden.

Objective: To enable people to prepare themselves for their encounters with the Tempter.

Introduction:

Who could want anything more? Adam and Eve were living in a beautiful garden where all of their needs were met day by day. They enjoyed regular times of fellowship with their Creator. They had a meaningful vocation as the keepers of the garden. They knew a complete love for each other, and were partners in the only perfect marriage that has ever existed. Their marriage was truly made in heaven!

Everything was wonderful until the snake showed up in the garden. Tradition has indicated that the snake was one of God's most beautiful creatures. Unfortunately for the man and the woman God's enemy chose to approach the woman through the snake. Eve was not prepared for what would follow, and the world has never been the same since.

The rebellion that started in heaven is now transferred to earth.

Is this story about the snake and the woman in the garden a true story or is it just a myth?

Many would regard it as just a myth, but I choose to regard it as a matter of history. The rest of the Bible regards this chapter as an important piece of history. It is used a number of times to support some other important insight into the will of God for our lives.

Furthermore, the primary truth set forth in this chapter corresponds to reality as we have come to know it. Everyone seems to know that there is something basically wrong with

man as we know him, but they are at a loss to explain it. This chapter explains it! Man and woman ran into a snake in the garden which led them into a life of sin.

Accepting this record as being true, what can we learn about Satan, and our relationship to him? Given what he did to this couple in the garden, we need to be sensitive to him and what he is still seeking to do in the world. You do accept the reality of the devil, don't you? I trust that you are not like the boy who was being threatened by his teacher that the devil would get him if he continued to do something wrong. He replied, "O I know about the devil. He doesn't scare me. He is just like Santa Claus. It is your Daddy". Wrong! The old serpent that tempted Eve in the garden is still alive and well on planet earth.

I. THE SNAKE IS AN INTRUDER

The snake does not belong in the garden, or at least the snake as an instrument of the devil does not belong in the garden. The garden is a special place that the Creator has prepared for the man and the woman. It is their home. But it is the very nature of the snake to show up where it has not been invited.

1. He intrudes into the holy places of our lives.

The garden was where Adam and Eve met with the Creator. It was holy ground to them in a very special way. Yet the snake, Satan, crawls his way right into the midst of this holy place. He has been doing this ever since.

Did you ever consider where Satan appears in the Scriptures? In the book of Job he makes an appearance in heaven where the angels of God are gathered in the presence of the Lord. There he is right in the midst of these blessed sons of God---an intruder.

In the life of our Lord he made his most dramatic appearance while Jesus was seeking a place in the wilderness to be alone with God to consider the type of ministry He is to have.

Jesus went into the desert in the glow of the Holy Spirit who had settled upon Him at His baptism. But there is the snake in the wilderness!

It ought not surprise us if we encounter the snake in a holy place, maybe even in the sanctuary. We are probably wrong in thinking that the snake prefers places of indulgences: bars, brothels, casinos and places like that. He may be more likely to show his ugly head in the secret place where you meet with God. He is more likely to be here in this place of worship than he is in a barroom.

2. He intrudes into the personal.

Could anything be more personal than your relationship with God? Yet it is Eve's relationship with God that becomes the concern of Eve when she meets the snake in the garden. "Hast God said?" he wants to know. He is more concerned about your personal relationship with God than anything else. His focus is always upon this most personal and vital part of life.

You do not have to invite the snake into the garden; he just shows up. He is an intruder. Eve did not look for him, or would our Lord look for him in the wilderness, but there he was. He pushes his way into the holy and personal parts of your life without invitation. He is an intruder!

I guess that I always feel that way about snakes. It is always a frightening experience when you happen upon one. I always feel that they have intruded into my world; at least they are not there by my invitation.

II. THE SNAKE IS THE ACCUSER.

The two primary words used in the Bible of the enemy help us understand his nature. The oldest word is Satan which has the root idea of adversary. This evil personality/has chosen

to forsake his role as the obedient creature of God and to become an adversary of God, a rival to His place in His universe. The other word is devil means to slander or to accuse. Both of these aspects of his evil personality are highlighted by this appearance of the snake in the garden. Because of his evil intent to frustrate the purpose of the Creator God, he approaches Eve as the accuser. Just a little reflection on this conversation will make this clear.

1. He questions the goodness of God.

Actually he does not come to say to Eve plainly, "God is not good". This would be out of character for him. Rather he just asks a question with a tone in his voice that makes his intention clear. "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The tone of his voice said, "I cannot believe that God would say such a thing! Surely He must be withholding something from you." Hidden in the question is the implication that God is not good. "Surely if he was good, he would not withhold even the one tree from you." Have you ever heard the voice of the snake? He often approaches at the most inopportune time. It may be when something painful has come into your life. You will hear the snake hiss his question, "Surely if God is really good, and really loved you, He would not allow something like this to happen to you!" You need to be aware that before Satan can accomplish his goal in your life he must undermine your confidence in God. This is the reason that he appears as the Accuser.

2. He questions the trustworthiness of God.

After sowing the seed of doubt in the mind of Eve concerning the goodness of God, he then accuses God of not being truthful or trustworthy. When the woman tells him that they will die if they eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the snake

says, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." What has the enemy said? He is implying that you cannot depend on what God says. His word is not trustworthy. He is not reliable! 0 he does not come out and say this directly, rather he just implies it. He is undermining the confidence of Eve in God and His word.

He still pursues the same agenda. He is still the accuser. Are you aware that many of the negative thoughts that enter your mind are actually thoughts planted by the accuser? He is still trying to destroy the confidence of humankind in their Creator God and His Son the Lord Jesus. We ought not to be surprised at all of the attempts to discredit the trustworthiness of the Bible. Because the Scriptures claim to be the Word of God, the enemy knows that if he can discredit the Scriptures in your eyes, he can destroy your confidence in God.

Do not ever forget it! The snake that found its evil way into the garden was an accuser, and he is still an accuser in the sophisticated world in which we live.

III. THE SNAKE IS THE DECEIVER.

What the snake said to Eve was not totally false. God did know that there would be a certain knowledge that would come to the man and the woman if they ate from the forbidden fruit. The devil is the master of the half-truth. He is the deceiver. He always has a hidden agenda.

1. He deceives about the nature of sin.

Read the conversation between the woman and the snake carefully. What did the snake suggest to the woman that she might do? Did he suggest that she rebel against God and throw off His sovereignty over her life and world? No! He rather appealed to her to act in

her own best interest. He never once indicated that God would be affected in some way by her action. He did not explain to her that if she ate the fruit that she would be in rebellion against her Creator God.

Yet this was at the heart of what Eve and Adam did. They actually took a step to become a god themselves. They acted in self interest rather than in obedience to God. Sin is always an act in which we attempt to replace God in his universe. We are always choosing our own interest rather than God's interest.

I doubt that Eve would have eaten the fruit if the snake had told her the truth. He successfully deceived her by giving to her only a half truth. Have you ever fell for one of his half-truths, or distortions of the truth? Have you ever put your interest above God's interest because the snake had whispered one of his lies in your ear? Have you been thinking that you are very bright when the real source of your idea is the snake? He will deceive you concerning he nature of sin.

2. He deceives concerning the consequences of sin.

"You will not surely die." Did they die when they ate? No, they did not die physically in that moment. But, yes, they did die spiritually the moment they ate. There was an immediate breach in their relationship with God. When God would later come walking in the Garden, for the first time they were afraid of God, and attempted to hide themselves. Life would never be the same. The enemy always deceives us concerning the consequences of sin. He will get you so focused on the supposed benefits and pleasures that you completely forget about any consequences. He never allows the young person being tempted to take their first illegal drug to consider where the path of drugs usually leads. He never allows them to consider

that deadly addiction might be a possibility. Indeed, he will whisper in your ear, "O you are different. They became addicted because they are weak. You are strong. It would never happen to you."

He never allows the person being tempted into illicit sex to consider the consequences. He never mentions an unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted disease, a guilty conscience, disappointed parents, or what it may do to your sexual partner. He deceives about the consequences of sin. No one was ever more surprised than Adam and Eve with the outcome of their eating the forbidden fruit. They listened to the snake rather than to the sure Word of God.

Do you dare consider which one of the devil's lies you may be believing?

Conclusion:

The snake is good at what he does! He has successfully trapped every human being that has ever walked on this planet, except One. The only person ever subjected to his alluring voice who recognized it for what it was from the beginning is the Lord Jesus Christ. Every time the snake tried to lead him into sin, he failed. Jesus recognized him for what he really is.

My only hope of victory over the snake is to allow the Lord Jesus to fill my life with His wonderful presence and power day by day. Through Christ we can overcome the evil one.

He is greater than any Evil One that we may encounter on this planet.

Be vigilant! The snake still crawls around on the earth doing his horrible work. He claims new victims every day. Don't let him add your name to his list. He will not be content until he watched you die and be separated from God eternally. You can smash his ugly head by the power that is in the name of Christ. Stand firm! Resist him! Confront him! You are more than an overcome through the Lord Jesus who overcame him again and again, and finally in a complete victory at the cross.