

TUTORIAL
1.15

Adam and Eve disobeyed God

See Tutorial 1.6 notes for overall instructions.
The portions of Scripture referred to in this tutorial are:
Genesis 3:1-8.

Last time

We reminded ourselves of some important background to the part of God's Narrative we're about to hear. How Lucifer, lifted up with unbelievable arrogance led a rebellion of many angels against God. How they were expelled from God's presence to await their terrible eventual fate... but, far from being remorseful or repentant, to this day he, they, remain committed in their hatred, their antipathy toward God and His image-bearing human race.

Life in Paradise

So we return to the Narrative where we left off. Adam and Eve in their true, pure innocence, relishing the place God had made for them, delighting in their companionship, growing – we can safely assume – under God's tutelage, in their grasp of what was involved in their caretaking responsibilities over Creation. And enjoying their relationship with God, as their Guide and Father.

Remember the freedom they were given to enjoy the produce from the garden...we can only imagine the sights, sounds and tastes that were available to them – the variety of decorative and edible plants, the animals around them. Senses perfectly tuned to appreciate them.

Satan in disguise

One observer of all of this found no delight in the life of these humans in Paradise or their relationship with God. We can only begin to imagine the bitterness, the hatred that must have consumed Satan as he watched these image-bearers of the One whose position he coveted...and the jealousy over their God-given caretaker roles in Creation. Watching and waiting he hatches a plan to try to bring about the death, the separation, that God had said would result from the humans going their own way and eating of *The Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil*.

In Genesis chapter 3, God's Narrative describes the day when he enacts his plan. We aren't told specifically why Satan chooses to disguise himself a snake, although the text gives a hint by saying that it was the "shrewdest" of the animals. A pattern is established here that continues to the present time – of God's Enemy carefully, cunningly, viciously, finding ways to disguise himself, and wrapping his deception in attractive or seemingly benign packaging. And, as we'll see, finding our points of vulnerability, using our pride, our desires for fulfillment... whatever he can, to whisper his false story to us. His intent is not to frighten, but to deceive. And he, and his servant fallen angels, are masters of their craft.

Eve, willingly deceived

Certainly, from the Narrative (Genesis 3) when he finds Eve alone she is not alarmed, and very willing to conduct a conversation. It's significant that he begins with questions. Questions often seem neutral, but it's always important to assess the premise from which they come. His line of questioning will effectively cause her to doubt God's good motives toward them. And, by implication, to create for the first time a glimpse of another more independent and self-determining approach to life. Why should they after all, is the implication, not make decisions for themselves? Surely God's warning about death resulting from eating fruit from a particular tree was exaggerated! What was all this about death, anyway? Could it be that God had selfishly kept something agreeable back from them? Were His intentions toward them so perfect after all? Had they been naïve in believing and obeying Him so unquestioningly? Might there be an unexplored and desirable dimension to life less dependent on Him?

And so, gladly buying into Satan's deception, being enticed now by the appearance of the tree, and suddenly hungry for the independent wisdom he said would result, she ate some of the fruit. (3:6) And then, as we know, Adam willingly ate some as well.

The resulting death

The results of their decision were immediate and catastrophic. The Narrative says nothing about any physical changes to them or their surroundings, but everything had changed.

They *saw* everything differently. Indeed, it says (3:7) that their eyes were *opened*; but it was not the pleasant, liberating experience Satan had intimated and which they'd imagined. They suddenly found themselves ashamed, naked, exposed, no longer at home in the world God had created for them, no longer comfortable with who they were, or with each other.

So had God exaggerated when He said they'd die if they ate from that tree? They were still breathing, their senses still functioning.

But God had, of course, spoken truly. Death, inevitably, tragically had now become part of who they were. They had chosen to cut themselves off from God, the source of their life.

Physical death had now become the end point of their lives on the earth, their trajectory. And ultimately, they were destined eternally for the place prepared for the Enemy, all the enemies of God. That's who they identified with, and they would share their fate.

The broken relationship

The Narrative makes it clear that the amazing God to God-image-bearer relationship was now broken...and that is the real essence of death. Where formerly they were innocently pure, now their nakedness brought a sense of shame, of dissonance in God's world. And now they are forced by their own choice to seek their own solutions, to provide for their own needs.

Feeling shame and wrongly assuming this is an external problem, a matter of form, they try to hide their shame with leaves, to make themselves presentable again, according to their own standards. According to their own perceptions of "good and evil". But this is no solution. Their problem is inner, of the spirit, it's way out of their control, their ability to patch things up.

Now, when God comes to the Garden (which sounds, from the Narrative, like a regular point up to this time) they hide. Fear has displaced harmony and delight. Everything is wrong, out of kilter. Shame and fear were, in fact, the right response for them. They had much to be ashamed of and much to fear. They had listened to God's Enemy, and identified with his rebellion. They had become rebels and enemies themselves...in their very being. This too is death. They were now facing the righteous anger of a God who will not, cannot, ignore anyone who arrogantly tries to write their own story. It's His. He's the Author. Anyone who doesn't acknowledge that, who listens to any other voice, will suffer the eternal consequences.



DISCUSSION POINTS

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1. How does it make you feel when you think about the reality of a powerful, and crafty being, Satan, who is determined to stop people from knowing God and to spoil the relationships with God of those who do know Him?

2. Describe some of the biggest influences on this society which you suspect are actually put there or at least manipulated by Satan so that he can influence people away from Truth. (Think of those things which most people tolerate, or even support as right and fair, but which seem to be against what we've seen of God's character so far in this study.)
3. Think about some of the famous people and celebrities you know of and the well documented problems in their relationships. Trace that rather sad picture back to the separation and isolation that resulted from Adam and Eve rebelling against God.
4. How big a part do you feel that fear plays in our lives, and how much of that can we relate to the fear that Adam and Eve felt after they'd sinned?