

Creation and the Fall



SABBATH—FEBRUARY 2

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 3:1–15; Matthew 4:3–10; Colossians 2:20–23; John 3:17; Revelation 14:6, 7.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘I will put hatred between you and the woman. Your children and her children will be enemies. Her son will crush your head. And you will crush his heel’ ” (Genesis 3:15, NIV).

A COMEDIAN USED TO PLAY A WOMAN CHARACTER CALLED GERALDINE, A MINISTER'S WIFE. In a one skit, Geraldine came home with an expensive new dress. Her husband (also played by the same comedian) got angry. Geraldine then cried out: “The devil made me buy this dress! I didn't [did not] want to buy the dress. The devil kept bothering me.”

Her response was supposed to be funny. But our world and the evil in it show that Satan is no laughing matter.

For some people, the idea of the devil is an old-time myth not to be taken seriously. But the Bible is very clear. Satan is a defeated enemy (Revelation 12:12; 1 John 3:8). But he is here on the earth. And he tries to cause as much destruction as possible to God's creation.

This week we will study one of Satan's early attacks to find out what we can learn from it. We are still under attack from him, but we can claim the victory that is ours in Christ.

SUNDAY—FEBRUARY 3**“THE SERPENT (SNAKE) WAS MORE CLEVER” (Genesis 3:1, NIV)**

Read Genesis 3:1. How is Satan, in the form or shape of a serpent, described? How is the truth of that picture shown in that one verse?

The serpent is very clever in the way he introduces his temptation. He does not make a direct attack but tries instead to get the woman (Eve) to talk with him. Note that the serpent’s words come in two parts. First, he asks if God really said what she thinks He said. At the same time, he frames (makes) his question in a way that raises doubt in the woman’s mind about God. Satan asks, “Did God really hold back something from you? Did He not give you permission to eat from every tree in the Garden?” By twisting what God said, the serpent tempts the woman to correct what he says. In this way, Satan successfully pulls her into conversation. The serpent’s plan is really clear.

Of course, that should not surprise us. Jesus called the devil “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44, NIV). In Revelation 12:9, the devil fools the whole world, which means that none of us, even as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, are safe. Satan has, clearly, lost none of his cleverness. He still uses the same plan that was successful with Eve. Satan brings up questions about God’s

word and God’s plans. He hopes to raise doubts and lead us into “conversation.” We must be always watchful (1 Peter 5:8) to protect ourselves against his tricks.

Compare¹ Matthew 4:3–10 with Genesis 3:1. What same trick did Satan try on Jesus? Why did it fail? What lessons can we learn from how Jesus answered the devil’s attacks in the wilderness? In what ways does Satan try the same thing with us now?



Satan uses the same tricks on us that he used on Eve, tempting us to doubt God’s Word.

MONDAY—FEBRUARY 4**THE WOMAN AND THE SERPENT (Genesis 3:2, 3)**

Read Genesis 3:2, 3. How did the woman (Eve) answer the serpent? What mistakes did she make?

1. compare—show how two or more things are the same or different.

Eve clearly knew the command of God. Yet, she made a statement that went beyond what God had said. God had clearly warned Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree. He said nothing about not touching it. We do not know what caused Eve to say He did. But there is no question that by thinking she should not touch the fruit, Eve would have been less tempted to eat it. This is because Eve could not eat what she could not touch.

How often do we face the same thing today? Suppose someone comes with teachings that seem to follow the Bible but still have just a few errors. These few errors can ruin everything else. Error, even mixed with truth, is still error.



God clearly told Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree.

Read Matthew 15:7–9. What warning does Jesus give the scribes and Pharisees about the addition of human thinking to the Word of God? Compare this with Revelation 22:18 and Colossians

2:20–23. According to Colossians 2:23, what are the dangers of making up rules that we think will protect us against sin?

The problem with sin is not a lack of rules but a sinful heart. Even in a worldly society, we often hear calls for more laws against crime when we already have enough laws. We do not need new laws as much as we need new hearts.

In what ways might we be in danger of following the things that the Bible has warned us about? Rules set up by the Bible are very important. The question is, How can we be sure that the rules we follow are not going to lead us astray? Bring your answer to class.



We do not need new laws as much as we need new hearts.

TUESDAY—FEBRUARY 5

**TRICKED BY THE “PROOF”
(Genesis 3:4–6)**

Read Genesis 3:4–6. What are the principles (rules) that led to Adam and Eve’s downfall? What can we learn from their experience that can help us to deal with our temptations?

Satan is successful in drawing Eve into talking with him. He also is successful in raising doubts about what God said and why. Now Satan tells Eve that God is not telling the truth, and he gives a false explanation of why God really does not permit them to eat of the fruit. Satan also says that God is withholding something good in order to keep Adam and Eve from reaching their full growth. In doing so, Satan builds on his past question about whether God has withheld some of the trees from them.

Eve uses three lines of “proof” that lead her to believe that she would profit (benefit) from eating the fruit. First, she sees that the tree is good for food. Perhaps she has watched the serpent eating the fruit. Or Satan may have boasted about how good it tasted. It is interesting to Eve that God warned Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree because she has noticed that it is “good for food.” Talk about a struggle between the senses and a clear “Thus saith the Lord”!

A second line of “proof” that makes Eve eat the fruit is that it is pleasant to the eyes. No doubt all the fruit in the Garden is beautiful. But for some reason, Eve is more interested in the fruit that Satan is offering her.

The supposed power of the fruit to make one wise is the third reason that

Eve wants to eat the fruit. The serpent has “promised” her that eating the fruit will make her know more and become wise like God. How sad that Eve believes the serpent because the Bible says that she already is like God (Genesis 1:27).

We are told that Eve is fooled, but Adam is not (1 Timothy 2:14). If Adam is not fooled, why does he eat? Adam knowingly disobeys God. He chooses to follow Eve rather than God. How often is this same kind of action seen today? How easily we can be tempted by what others say and do, even if their words and actions do not agree with the Word of God (Bible). Adam listens to Eve instead of to God. The rest is the nightmare known as human history. (Read Romans 5:12–21.)



Eve saw that the fruit was “good for food” and ate it.

WEDNESDAY—FEBRUARY 6

GRACE AND JUDGMENT IN EDEN: PART 1 (Genesis 3:14, 15)

In Genesis 3, after the Fall, the Lord’s opening words are all questions:

“Where are you? . . . Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? . . . What is this you have done?” (Genesis 3:9, 11, 13, NIV).

In contrast, God’s first announcement in this chapter follows these questions. When speaking to the serpent, what does God say? And what is the meaning of His words? Read Genesis 3:14, 15.

Think about the meaning of what is happening here. God’s first announcement to the fallen world is judgment against Satan, not humans. Even in that judgment against Satan, God gives people the hope and promise of the gospel (verse 15). This is because as God announces Satan’s doom, He preaches hope for the people. Despite Adam and Eve’s sin, the Lord quickly shows them the promise of the Savior’s coming to pay for their sins.

Notice, too, that after this promise in verse 15 the Lord hands out His judgment on Adam and Eve: “The Lord God said to the woman, ‘I will greatly increase your pain when you give birth. You will be in pain when you have children.’ . . . The Lord God said to Adam, ‘You listened to your wife’ ” (Genesis 3:16, 17, NIV).

Do not miss this point: the promise of salvation comes first, followed by judgment. The judgment comes only after the gospel is given. If it were the other way, judgment would mean nothing but punishment. But the Bible

is clear: “ ‘God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him’ ” (John 3:17, NIV).

Why is it so important always to remember that God’s purpose is to save us, not to judge us? How does sin in our lives cause us to forget that important truth? That is, how does sin cause us to turn away from God?

THURSDAY—FEBRUARY 7

GRACE² AND JUDGMENT IN EDEN: PART 2 (Revelation 14:6, 7)

In Genesis 1 and 2, NIV, God makes announcements: “Let there be lights in the huge space of the sky. . . . Let the land produce all kinds of living creatures [things]. . . . It is not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 1:14; Genesis 1:24; and Genesis 2:18, NIV). All these announcements deal with Creation. Some of them deal with the making of humans in that Creation.

As we read yesterday, the next announcement recorded in the Bible appears in Genesis 3:14, 15. In this announcement the Lord offers people the gospel. So, in the Bible, God’s first announcements deal with Creation and then with salvation. And this salvation comes within the framework (plan) of judgment itself. It would have to. After all, what is the purpose of the gospel, what is the “good news,” if there was no judgment? The very idea of “the gospel”

2. grace—God’s gift of mercy and forgiveness that He freely offers us to take away our sins.

carries within itself the idea of judgment. This is the judgment that we do not have to face. That is the “good news”!

We have broken God’s law. And God will judge our sins. But in Christ Jesus we are excused from the punishment that this judgment would be sure to bring.

Creation, gospel, and judgment appear both in the early pages of the Bible and in the later ones too. Read Revelation 14:6, 7. In what ways are these verses connected with the first three chapters of Genesis? That is, what matching ideas are found in all these verses?

In Revelation 14:6, 7, we see an announcement of God as the Creator. This is a key (important) theme in the opening pages of Genesis. In Revelation 14, the “everlasting gospel” comes first and is followed by the announcement of judgment. This means that judgment is there, but not before the gospel. So, the foundation of our present-truth message has to be grace. The good news, then, is that no matter what we deserve, we can stand pardoned and be made pure and righteous (holy) through Jesus. Without the gospel, our future would be the same as the serpent’s (Satan’s) and his seed (those who have chosen to follow Satan). But this end will not happen to the woman (the church) and her seed (children). And, what is interesting, this great news appears even in Eden, in God’s first announcements to a fallen (sinful) world.

FRIDAY—FEBRUARY 8

ADDITIONAL STUDY: “God gave our first parents the food He planned for people to eat. It was never God’s plan to have the life of any creature [living thing] taken. There was to be no death in Eden. . . .”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church*, page 228.

“Satan advertises God’s law of love as a law of selfishness. He announces that it is impossible for us to obey the commandments. For the fall of our first parents, Satan blames the Creator. This leads men to look upon God as the author of sin, suffering, and death. Jesus was to expose [show] this lie for what it really was.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 24.

“But God did not leave to man the results of the evil he had chosen. In the sentence announced against Satan, an example of salvation was given [Genesis 3:15]. . . . Our first parents [Adam and Eve] heard this message, and to them it was a promise. Before Adam and Eve heard of the thorn and the thistle, of the toil [hard work] and sorrow that must be a part of their lives, they listened to words that could not fail to give them hope. All that they lost by giving in to Satan, they could regain through Christ.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 27.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① In class, go over your answer to Monday’s final question. What kind of

rules do we make that could turn us into the very people who displeased Jesus? At the same time, how can we make better decisions to follow the principles of truth as shown in the Bible?

② Eve trusted her senses instead of a very clear command from God. Why do we find it so easy to do the same thing?

③ Think about the sharp difference between the Creation story and the ideas of evolution. Why is it impossible to put together these two oppos-

ing ideas of our beginnings without destroying the clear meaning of the Bible? Why is a correct understanding of Creation important for a correct understanding of the Fall?

④ Some groups of people think that the idea of a real devil is nothing but foolishness. Still others can become too interested in the power of evil and evil spirits. What about the people around you? What do they think? How can you learn to keep the right balance between these opposing thoughts?