



Deborah's Messianic Ministries

Teaching - Training - Worship Center

Proclaiming The Way of Messiah

THE FALL OF MAN: GEN 3:1–24 PART 1¹

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I. THE TEMPTATION—GENESIS 3:1–5

A. The Introduction of the Tempter—Genesis 3:1a

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which YHVH ELOHIM had made.

Verse 1a introduces the tempter, whose major characteristic is described as *more subtle than any beast of the field*. The creature here is a literal serpent or a literal snake, which Satan uses to carry out this temptation. Therefore, the serpent is connected with Satan. Satan and the serpent are connected in other passages; such as,

(2Co 11:3 TLV) But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your minds might be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion and purity to the Messiah.

(Rev 12:9 TLV) And the great dragon was thrown down—the ancient serpent, called the devil and satan, who deceives the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

(Rev 20:2 TLV) He seized the dragon—the ancient serpent, who is the devil and satan—and bound him for a thousand years.

In fact, one rabbinic interpretation of the passage is that this serpent is Satan. A second interpretation by the rabbis is that the serpent represents the evil inclination.

The Hebrew word for *serpent* is *nachash*. This is the same root as another Hebrew word, *nechoshet*, which means “**bronze**.” In Numbers 21:9, God told Moses to make a bronze serpent. The Hebrew words used for “**bronze serpent**” are *nachash nechoshet*. Later, in 2 Kings 18:4, it was called *Nehushtan* because of that same connection. The serpent’s connection with bronze indicates that the snake appeared shiny and luminous, similar to the way **Satan appears as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). That is the meaning of the word *nachash* as a noun.** Also as a noun, **it has the meaning of “divination,”** showing the very close **connection between the occult world and Satanism** (Num. 23:23; 24:1).

(Num 23:23 TLV) There is no sorcery effective against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel! Now it will be said of Jacob and Israel, ‘See what God has done!’

(Num 24:1 TLV) When Balaam realized that it was pleasing in the eyes of Adonai to bless Israel, he did not resort to sorceries as at the other times, but turned his face toward the wilderness.

¹Outline and Commentary Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum and David Sterns Jewish New Testament Commentary

In fact, divination practices of the ancient Middle East often included the use of a serpent. As a **verb**, *nachash* means “to practice divination” and “to observe signs” (Gen. 30:27; 44:5, 15; Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10).

(Gen 30:27 TLV) But Laban said to him, “If I’ve found favor in your eyes—I’ve looked for good omens, and Adonai has blessed me because of you.”

(Gen 44:5 TLV) Isn’t this the one from which my lord drinks? He even uses it especially to discern by divination. What you’ve done is evil!”

(Gen 44:15 TLV) “What’s this deed you’ve done?” Joseph said to them, “Didn’t you know that a man like me can discern by divination?”

(Lev 19:26 TLV) “You are not to eat any meat with the blood still in it, nor are you to use enchantments, or practice sorcery.

(Deu 18:9 TLV) When you enter the land Adonai your God is giving you, you are not to learn to do the abominations of those nations.

(Deu 18:10 TLV) There must not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or a fortune-teller, soothsayer, omen reader, or sorcerer,

Moses states that the serpent *was more subtle than any beast of the field*. **The Hebrew word for subtle is *arum*. This is a wordplay with Genesis 2:25, which states that Adam and Eve were *arumim*, meaning “naked.” So, Adam and Eve were *arumim*, but Satan was *arum*.** In other words, human nakedness was not something that was problematic before the Fall, because there was no lust involved. Now, the integrity of humanity became the target of Satan’s attack. Their nakedness meant that they were oblivious to evil; they did not know where the traps lay, but Satan, of course, did.

The same word used of Adam’s and Eve’s nakedness is used of the **serpent’s craftiness**, because he would use it to take advantage of their integrity.

This Hebrew word has a wide range of meanings: “subtle,” “crafty,” “shrewd,” “sensible,” “prudent,” and “cunning,” with a mixture of both good and bad. In a good sense, it has the concept of being “prudent,” and that is its usage in the Book of Proverbs (1:4; 12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8, 15, 18; 22:3).

(Pro 1:4 AMPC) That prudence may be given to the simple, and knowledge, discretion, *and* discernment to the youth--

(Pro 12:16 AMPC) A fool's wrath is quickly *and* openly known, but a prudent man ignores an insult.

(Pro 12:23 AMPC) A prudent man is reluctant to display his knowledge, but the heart of [*self-confident*] fools proclaims their folly. [[Isa 32:6](#)]

(Pro 13:16 AMPC) Every prudent man deals with knowledge, but a [*self-confident*] fool exposes *and* flaunts his folly.

(Pro 14:8 AMPC) The Wisdom [*godly Wisdom, which is comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God*] of the prudent is to understand his way, but the folly of [*self-confident*] fools is to deceive.

(Pro 14:15 AMPC) The simpleton believes every word he hears, but the prudent man looks *and* considers well where he is going.

(Pro 14:18 AMPC) The simple acquire folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

(Pro 22:3 AMPC) A prudent man sees the evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished [*with suffering*].

It is also used in an evil sense, meaning “crafty” (Job 5:12; 15:5).

(Job 5:12 AMPC) He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise *or* anything of [*lasting*] worth.

(Job 15:5 AMPC) For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty.

In Hebrew, the word is neutral. Shrewdness is not evil in itself, but it can be used in an evil way. Because the serpent was more subtle or “more shrewd” than all the other animals, Satan chose to use the serpent. Satan’s aim in using the shrewd serpent is to try to regain his authority over the earth, something he had lost when he fell.

The verse continues: *which YHVH ELOHIM had made*. God did create the serpent and God made the serpent shrewd, but again, “shrewd” can be used in a good sense as well as an evil sense. In this case, it is used in a neutral sense, because there was no evil within the animal kingdom at this point. **The rabbinic interpretation of this phrase is that God had intended for the snake to be elevated above the creatures of creation as a servant of mankind, and so He gave him human characteristics. The snake, the rabbis teach, had the power of speech and walked upright. The rabbinic view contains parts that are accurate, but also parts that are questionable. God created the snake with the neutral characteristics of prudence or shrewdness, which Satan will now use for sinful purposes.**

The length of time between Genesis 2:25 and 3:1 is unknown, so it is impossible to know how long they lived in the garden when the temptation took place. However, contrary to the opinion of many liberal theologians, **this temptation is viewed as a historical event**. Much of what the New Testament teaches on this passage is based on it’s being a true historical event (Jn. 8:44; Rom. 5:12; 16:20; 1 Cor. 15:21; 2 Cor. 11:3–4; 1 Tim. 2:14).

(Joh 8:44 TLV) You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks lies he is just being himself—for he is a liar and the father of lies.

(Rom 5:12 TLV) So then, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, in the same way death spread to all men because all sinned.

(Rom 16:20 TLV) Now the God of shalom will soon crush satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Yeshua be with you.

God, the source of *shalom* (peace, wholeness; the same phrase is used at 15:33) **will soon crush the Adversary**, Satan, the ultimate source of all opposition to God (see [Mat 4:1](#)) **under your feet**. This imagery draws on [Gen 3:15](#); compare [Luk 10:19](#), [Heb 2:7-9](#), and a Jewish work written around 108 B.C.E., the Testament of Levi 18:12:

"And Beliar [a variant of B'liya'al, another name for Satan, as at [2Co 6:15](#) will be bound by him [the "new priest" that the Lord will raise up, 18:2], and he will give power to his children to tread on evil spirits."

According to [Gen 3:15](#) it is the "seed of the woman," understood at [Gal 4:4](#) to be the Messiah, who will "bruise" or "crush" the serpent's "head." But here it is *God* who **will... crush the Adversary under your feet**. Therefore, by implication Yeshua is identified both with God and with those who trust in him (see

[Mat 2:15](#)).²

(1Co 15:21 TLV) For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also has come through a Man.

(2Co 11:3 TLV) But I am afraid that somehow, **as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning**, your minds might be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion and purity to the Messiah.

(2Co 11:4 TLV) For if someone comes and proclaims another Yeshua whom we did not proclaim, or if you receive a different spirit that you did not receive, or a different “good news” that you did not accept, you put up with that well enough!

(1Ti 2:14 TLV) Also Adam was not deceived but the woman—being deceived, she fell into transgression.

Sha'ul does not say that Eve sinned, but that she **became involved in the transgression** (literally, "has become in transgression"), which I take to mean that she became mixed up in Adam's transgression. At [Rom 5:12-21](#) Sha'ul teaches that it was Adam who sinned through directly disobeying God's command to him ([Gen 2:17](#), [Gen 3:1-7](#)), and therefore he bears the primary responsibility for the "Fall"-the introduction of sin into human life. Although the Apocrypha gives us the verse, "Sin began with a woman, and thanks to her we must all die" ([Sir 25:24](#)), the New Testament presents a different picture. Eve was not the sinner, Adam was, since it was he who disregarded God's command. Eve, rather, was "deceived" ([2Co 11:3](#))-when the serpent duped her, she **became involved in Adam's transgression**.³

B. The Attacks of the Tempter—Genesis 3:1b–5

In this temptation, Satan launched two separate attacks, speaking through the snake.

1. The First Attack—Genesis 3:1b–3

a. The Questioning of God's Integrity—Genesis 3:1b

And he said unto the woman, Yea, has God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?

The first attack begins in verse 1b: *And he said unto the woman*; this is the first question recorded in the Scriptures, “**Has God really said you shall not eat of any tree of the garden?**” It was a query that **questioned the integrity of God, Satan's initial method was to question the reality of the command**. What God had actually said was quite clear. Now, “Satan the theologian” is going to make it unclear so that it becomes a matter of debate, when, in reality, even he knew there was only one tree which was forbidden to them.

b. The Response of Eve—Genesis 3:2–3

And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

^{2 2} Stern, D. H. (1996). [Jewish New Testament Commentary : a companion volume to the Jewish New Testament](#) (electronic ed., Ac 26:1). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

³ Stern, D. H. (1996). [Jewish New Testament Commentary : a companion volume to the Jewish New Testament](#) (electronic ed., Ac 26:1). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Eve's response contrasts the permitted from the prohibited. The permitted food is in verse 2: *Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat*; there is a recognition by Eve of divine liberty. As she was not yet in existence when God gave the order to Adam, she obviously received it by oral instruction from her husband.

Verse 3 contains the prohibition: *but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it*. She also reveals a recognition of divine limitation to the liberty they had been given earlier. So Eve clearly understood what the prohibition was. She could not eat of this tree and, she adds: *neither shall ye touch it*. Some have claimed that here she added to the Word of God, but this need not be taken as an addition on Eve's part, for this, too, might have come to her by oral instruction. Remember, she was not yet present when God had given the commandment to Adam. At any rate, the fact that she could not eat it or touch it shows that she clearly recognized the strict nature of the prohibition. She confirms this with the words: *lest ye die*. There is also a recognition of the penalty for disobedience. All of this shows clearly that Eve understood the situation quite well.

A rabbinic interpretation of this verse says that the serpent pushed Eve until she touched the tree and when she did not die, she said to herself, "Now as there is no death in touching, there is no death in eating." **These rabbinic interpretations are noted, not because they are agreed with, except where they correspond with the text, but simply to give a Jewish perspective on these things. Nevertheless, as always, our final authority is the written Word of God.**

2. The Second Attack—Genesis 3:4–5

a. The Denial of the Penalty—Genesis 3:4

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.

This is the first lie recorded in Scripture, and it came from the mouth of Satan. This is why Yeshua called Satan "the father of lies" (Jn. 8:44).

b. The Denial of God's Integrity—Genesis 3:5

for God does know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.

Satan moved from a perverse question to a clear, outward denial of God's integrity. As he launched this temptation, Satan said that God knows if she partakes of this tree, she will be *as God*. He wanted to create a motivation within Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit so that she will proceed to do it. The motivation is to be like God. According to Isaiah 14:14, it was this desire that caused the fall of Satan. Prior to Satan's fall, he declared five "I wills," the fifth of which was: *I will make myself like the Most High*. It was Satan's desire to be like God that caused his own fall, and now Adam's and Eve's desire to be like God will cause their fall as well.

One leading rabbi, Rashi, interpreted this phrase to mean, "they wished to be like God in being able to create the world's universe." The specific way they will be like God is by knowing good and evil. Satan tried to convey to Eve that it is God's knowledge of good and evil that makes Him God. In other words, the knowledge of good and evil is what will make them like God.

This was a bold satanic denial of God's goodness in which Satan was accusing God of selfishness and jealousy. He charged that the good God who gave them good is now withholding from them the greater good. Satan tried to convey the impression that man was capable of knowing good and evil as perfectly and as completely as God knows it, and so man could be like God. Furthermore, God was jealous of His knowledge of good and evil and did not want to share it with anybody else. Satan's method was to raise

doubts concerning the wisdom of God, the justice of God, and the love of God. He made a direct contradiction to God's command. He declared that disobedience to God will result in the highest good. But the fact will be that they would know good and evil only from the standpoint of sinners, not from the standpoint of being God. **Romans 7:19-20 teaches that they will know good, but they will be unable to do it; they will know evil, but they will be unable to resist it.**

(Rom 7:19 AMPC) For I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am [*ever*] doing.

(Rom 7:20 AMPC) Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it [*it is not myself that acts*], but the sin [*principle*] which dwells within me [*fixed and operating in my soul*].

II. THE FALL—GENESIS 3:6

A. The Areas of Temptation—Genesis 3:6a

And 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 to be desired to make one wise.

Satan tempted Eve in three areas, the same three areas in which he always tempts. According to 1 John 2:16, there are three areas of temptation: **the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. All three categories are found here.** **First**, the woman saw *that the tree was good for food*; here, then, is *the lust of the flesh*, with the focus on the physical, something that was physically appealing to her. **Secondly**, it was *a delight to the eyes*; here is *the lust of the eyes*, with the focus on something, which was aesthetically pleasing. **Thirdly**, *the tree was to be desired to make one wise*; here is “the pride of life,” and the temptation was in the realm of the spiritual and the mental. This would be mentally transforming. It would give them instantaneous knowledge, making them akin to God. It was: *to be desired*. **The Hebrew word for “desired” is *nechmad***, which has the same root as “to covet.” Eve was coveting God's position and knowledge. She felt that eating the fruit would give her something she did not now possess. This is always the essence of covetousness, to obtain something, which one does not now possess.

HaSatan used the same tactic on Yeshua, but did not succeed!

(Mat 4:1 AMPC) THEN YESHUA was led (guided) by the [*Holy*] Spirit into the wilderness (desert) to be tempted (tested and tried) by the devil.

(Mat 4:2 AMPC) And He went without food for forty days and forty nights, and later He was hungry. [[Exo 34:28](#); [1Ki 19:8](#)]

(Mat 4:3 AMPC) And the tempter came and said to Him, If You are God's Son, command these stones to be made [*loaves of*] bread.

(Mat 4:4 AMPC) But He replied, It has been written, Man shall not live *and* be upheld *and* sustained by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. [[Deu 8:3](#)]

(Mat 4:5 AMPC) Then the devil took Him into the holy city and placed Him on a turret (pinnacle, gable) of the temple sanctuary. [[Neh 11:1](#); [Dan 9:24](#)]

(Mat 4:6 AMPC) And he said to Him, If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, He will give His angels charge over you, and they will bear you up on their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone. [[Psa 91:11-12](#)]

(Mat 4:7 AMPC) Yeshua said to him, On the other hand, it is written also, You shall not tempt, test thoroughly, *or* try exceedingly the Lord your God. [[Deu 6:16](#)]

(Mat 4:8 AMPC) Again, the devil took Him up on a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory (the splendor, magnificence, preeminence, and excellence) of them.

(Mat 4:9 AMPC) And he said to Him, These things, all taken together, I will give You, if You will prostrate Yourself before me and do homage *and* worship me.

(Mat 4:10 AMPC) Then Yeshua said to him, Begone, Satan! For it has been written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve. [Deu 6:13]

(Mat 4:11 AMPC) Then the devil departed from Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

B. The Fall of Man—Genesis 3:6b

she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

This led to the Fall of man in two stages. The first stage was the fall of Eve: *she took of the fruit thereof*; the touching of it did not cause her death. Although in Gentile traditions the fruit is often pictured as an apple, **the primary views of rabbis are that it was either the grapevine, an *etrog* or citron, or a fig. She *did eat*, and when she ate of it, she failed to exercise her subordinate role. She committed the sin of initiation, and that caused her fall.**

Then came the second stage, the fall of Adam: *she gave also unto her husband with her.* Eve now became to Adam what the serpent had been to Eve. The serpent had tempted her; thus, she now tempts Adam. Those two words, *with her*, show that Adam was present all along and did not try to stop her. While she failed to exercise her subordinate role, he failed to exercise his headship. *and he did eat*, and became guilty of the sin of acquiescence.

Both Adam and Eve fell, but the Bible distinguishes their fall (1 Tim. 2:13–14). The distinction is this: Eve was deceived, a point also made in 2 Corinthians 11:3, **but Adam sinned with full knowledge; for him, it was an act of rebellion.** The Bible clearly places the responsibility of the Fall of man upon Adam as the representative head (Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:20–24). **This marked the breaking of the Edenic Covenant (Hos. 6:7).**

Tree of Life Version

Hos 6:7 But like Adam, they transgressed a covenant. There they dealt treacherously with Me.

Luk 3:38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Rom 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in a manner similar to the violation of Adam, who is a pattern of the One to come.

1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah will all be made alive.

1Co 15:45 So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

1Ti 2:13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

1Ti 2:14 Also Adam was not deceived but the woman—being deceived, she fell into transgression.

Jud 1:14 It was also about these people that Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with myriads of His kedoshim,