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CHAPTER ONE

The Sin of Adam and Eve

The six days of creation were just ended. The earth, the skies, the plants and animals of every description were all newly made by the almighty hand of God. The Creator had crowned His work by forming the man Adam from the dust of the earth and making the woman from the man's rib to be a helper suitable for him. He placed both of them in the beautiful paradise of Eden—the purest, sweetest home man has ever known on earth.*

Life in Eden was bliss. No pain, no sorrow, no hunger, no tears. There were no guilty consciences to mar perfect communion with God. Adam and Eve basked in the sunshine of God's love and favor.

But sadly, this bliss did not last forever. A shadow fell across the garden as the tempter entered. He cast a jealous eye upon the man and the woman and began to plot their downfall. Subtle and cunning, he approached our first parents in the form of a serpent. He was Satan, once an angel but now cast out of heaven, the archenemy of God. He plotted to ruin God's paradise, to spoil the perfectness of creation.

One of the greatest dramas of all time unfolded. Its consequences were so far reaching that only the greater drama at Golgotha surpasses its power. For there in the Garden of

*The story of Adam and Eve is found in Genesis 2:7—5:5.

Eden, Satan dared to strike at God's sovereignty. He dared to strike at God's authority in the new world that God had made. Satan wanted no less than to rule in the hearts and souls of the humans God had created.

Adam and Eve were surrounded by God's goodness. Daily they were aware of His blessings, for in the garden grew "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." They could eat of the fruit of all of these trees, except one. God had explained it clearly to Adam.

Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16, 17).

Under circumstances such as these, the man and woman had every reason to be faithful to God. Satan could hardly hope to lure them away from such overwhelming providence.

The Temptation

When Satan approached the woman in Eden, he lacked experience. This was a new pursuit for him. Never before had he been given the opportunity to tempt a human to sin. Though this was his first attempt, Satan could hardly have planned his strategy better. His tactics proved so successful, that he has not needed to change them down through the years. Let us note carefully how he tempted our first parents.

1. *He came disguised as a serpent.* Satan came to Eve under false pretenses. He did not announce that he was the devil, the enemy of God. Had he done so, Eve no doubt would have fled. Instead, he came in the form of a snake, to Eve a harmless animal of the field. And thus the tempter still comes to

us today, pretending to be what he is not.

2. *He came to Eve, instead of to Adam.* She was the weaker vessel, and through her he hoped to reach Adam, as, indeed, he succeeded to do. Satan still finds this trick useful, tempting us through our friends and companions.

3. *He came to Eve when she was near the forbidden tree, or so it seems.* It would have been better if she had been in a far corner of the garden. Those who hope to keep from sinning should keep themselves at a safe distance.

4. *Satan tempted Eve by asking a question.* “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Oh, how subtle was this question! Thus he accomplished two things. First, he planted a doubt in the woman’s mind. “Yea, hath God said? Do you think it is really true? Did God actually mean what He said?” Second, by his question he lured Eve into talking with him. She would have done better had she turned her back on the serpent and gone home to her husband, without speaking a word.

5. *Satan lied to Eve.* He is the father of lies¹ and could not long hide his true colors. God had said, “Thou shalt surely die,” but Satan contradicted those words saying, “Ye shall not surely die.” The devil does not hesitate to lie.

With a mixture of deceit and false promises, Satan flattered Eve: “God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” He promised them rewards and betterment, if they would but eat of the forbidden fruit.

The Sin

Eve should have known better. The tempter’s words were simply not true, could not be true. God had never mistreated them. There was nothing in Eve’s past to cause her to doubt

God's love and concern.

But the temptation had taken root in Eve's mind, and she could no longer think clearly. Her eyes were drawn to the forbidden fruit, now so enticing and so desirable. No matter that the trees roundabout were hanging heavy with delicious fruit. All that mattered to Eve was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, its fruit the more attractive because it was not lawful.

Looking on the fruit was in itself a dangerous step toward sin. Eve had no doubt glanced at the fruit before, but now she looked at it longingly. She "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise."

After looking, Eve took. The Bible says simply, "She took of the fruit thereof." She took it of her own free will, of her own choice. The devil did not break off the fruit and place it in her mouth. Eve took it herself.

Even so, the fatal act may not have yet been committed. The woman had been unwise to look on the fruit. She had made a mistake to pluck it off the tree. But there was still hope, because she had not eaten of it. Could she stop now? We learn from the Book of James that it was not likely that she would. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."² Then Eve ate the forbidden fruit. The deed was done. Satan must have smiled to himself as he watched. He had reason to smile even more as the next act unfolded. For now, after the sin was committed, Eve gave the fruit to her husband. Eve herself had become a temptress. No sooner had she become a sinner, than she tempted her husband to sin as well. Adam followed her example and ate of it also.

The transgression was complete. Sin forced open the

door to Eden and came marching in. The purity of the garden was spoiled, its perfection forever marred. Gone was the guiltlessness, the peace, the plenty. Now there was agonizing fear, crushing shame, a burden of remorse. In their bewildered state, Adam and Eve hid from the presence of God.

The man and the woman had been put to the test, and they had failed. They had fallen.

The Punishment

Sin always has its penalty. God had warned Adam, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” The human mind hardly comprehends the far-reaching extent of those words, the huge price that sin was to exact from mankind.

The sin of Adam and Eve brought with it, first of all, death. Not only did sin rupture their spiritual relationship with God, it brought natural death to mankind. From the moment of his fall, Adam was a dying man. He was no more clothed with immortality, but his body would grow old and feeble until at last it would return to the dust from which it had been taken.

Sin brought death. But it brought more. God pronounced a curse and a judgment upon the three parties involved in the transgression—the serpent, the woman, and the man.

God’s sentence upon the serpent was severe.

Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Genesis 3:14, 15).