

The Deception of Satan

by Zac Poonen

Satan attacks us by questioning God's Word and making us doubt God's intentions, with the ultimate aim of taking us away from the Lord and making us disobey God's Word.

Scripture: Genesis 3:1

Topics: "Deception", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Zac Poonen addresses the deception of Satan, illustrating how he questions God's Word to lead us away from Him, just as he did with Eve in the Garden of Eden. He emphasizes that Satan's ultimate goal is to steal our souls and destroy our lives by making us doubt God's commands, often presenting temptations that seem appealing to our bodies and minds. Poonen warns that many people, influenced by Satan's lies, fail to recognize the seriousness of disobeying God's Word, leading to destructive choices. He highlights the importance of maintaining a sensitive conscience to discern the subtle ways Satan can influence us, even through well-meaning friends. The sermon serves as a reminder to be vigilant against the deceptive tactics of the enemy.

Transcript

In Genesis 3:1, we can see how Satan attacks. It says there that the serpent was the craftiest of all the animals. Satan entered that serpent (just like the demons entered the pigs when Jesus cast them out of the man of Gadara). And Satan spoke to Eve through the serpent and asked her "Has God indeed said - You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" When Eve said that this was indeed what God had said, Satan countered God's Word and said, "You shall not die". Notice how Satan comes. First of all, he questions God's Word. That is how he comes to us too. "Has God really said that we are not to do that?", he asks, "What's wrong in doing this? These Biblical commands are old-fashioned. They were written for that time and that culture in which Paul lived. They are not meant to be literally obeyed by us in the 20th century", etc., etc.,

We find young and old people asking such questions constantly, little realizing that they are becoming mouthpieces of Satan. Even when their conscience tells them that something is wrong, they still use their reason and question what God has forbidden. When something is commanded or forbidden by God in His Word, we can be sure that God has a very good reason for doing so. But Satan always makes us question whether God really meant it like that etc., And what is Satan's ultimate aim in making us question God's Word? Exactly the same as was his aim in Eve's case - to take us away from the Lord, and to compel God

to reject us and cast us out, even as He cast Adam and Eve out of His presence.

Jesus once said that Satan was a thief. Satan does not steal money, for he knows that money has no eternal value. He steals only what has eternal value - primarily the souls of men. Jesus said further that after Satan steals, he kills and destroys what he has stolen (John 10:10). In contrast, Jesus went on to say, that He Himself had come to give us abundant life. Isn't it amazing that in a world of 5,500 million people, more than 99% of the people prefer to believe Satan's lies and to obey him rather than believe in Jesus Christ and obey the Word of God. There we can see what a tremendous work Satan has done in convincing people that it is not a serious matter to disobey God's Word.

When people take their first drink of alcohol, or smoke their first cigarette, or begin to take drugs like heroin and cocaine, do you think Satan warns them that these will destroy their bodies and minds on earth and finally send their souls to Hell for eternity? No. He doesn't tell them the truth - for that would be unpleasant to hear. He tells them that they will get a kick out of trying it, and that they can have some enjoyment out of it. That is what Satan told Eve too. And that is how he is deceiving millions of young people around the world today. Even if it is a matter of immorality or stealing other people's things, Satan says, "What's wrong with that? Don't be guided by outmoded 19th-century ideas" etc., Be careful of these thoughts that Satan puts into your mind. His ultimate purpose is to destroy you. We see in verse 6 that as soon as Eve saw that the tree was good for food, her body was drawn to it. That forbidden fruit has many 20th century counterparts. Many things that God has forbidden, we will find our bodies being drawn to. The Word of God goes on to say that Eve found the tree to be a delight to her eyes too. Our eyes will find many things very pleasing that God has forbidden us to even look at.

It says further that Eve found the fruit appealing to her mind as well. She saw the fruit as something that could make her wise. Our minds too are attracted to many things that God has forbidden. Be careful when your body and mind are drawn to something that your conscience tells you is wrong. I am sure that at that moment Eve's conscience told her clearly that what she was going to do was wrong. She knew very well that God had told her not to eat that fruit. But what did she do? Because her body and her mind both wanted the fruit, she convinced herself that there was nothing wrong in eating it. So she killed her conscience and took the fruit and ate it. What did Satan accomplish by making Eve sin? Many years earlier, he himself had fallen from God's presence. Once he had become evil, he was determined to make others evil too. It is the same with the human race now. When a person does something evil, he is not happy in being alone in the evil he has done. He wants to get others to do the same evil too.

In Proverbs 1:10, it says: "Don't go along with someone who leads you to do evil". Satan became evil and he wanted to drag Eve down with him too. And when Eve had partaken of that poisonous spirit, she wanted to drag her husband down. So she took another fruit and gave it to her husband. That is how evil has multiplied in the world through all the centuries. One man becomes evil and he drags others down with him. That is why we need to be alert always. Satan comes to us at times like a roaring lion. If he always came as a roaring lion, we would recognise him easily. But he doesn't always come like that. He sometimes comes as a sweet "angel of light" (2 Cor.11:14). It is then that we have to be really careful. Consider the time when Jesus told his disciples that He was going to suffer and die on the cross, Peter said "No , Lord, don't let that happen to You". But Jesus immediately turned around and told Peter "Get behind me Satan". He recognised that the suggestion to avoid the way of suffering was the voice of Satan, even though it came through Peter. Jesus knew that He had to go to the cross, because that was the only way man's sins could be forgiven. Peter did not know that. Peter was well- meaning, but he didn't realise at that moment that Satan was speaking through him to try and stop Jesus from going to the cross. Yes,

Satan can come to us even through a close friend and suggest something that sounds compassionate and good humanly speaking. So we must be alert at all times. The one thing we must all covet is a sensitive conscience - something that speaks to us loudly even when we do a small wrong.

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