

From God's Creation to God's Nation

Genesis 1:1 to Exodus 17:16



From God's Creation to God's Nation

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From God's Creation to God's Nation

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From God's Creation to God's Nation (Adult Sunday School Lesson Winter 2015)

January 26, 2015 / 0 Comments / in [Resources](#), [Sunday School](#) / by [Gabriel Morris](#)

From God's Creation to God's Nation, a Sunday School Lesson, taught by Ed Alsteadt, covering Genesis 1 through Exodus 17. It covers the first four dispensations found in the Bible, as well as the key characters that would eventually establish the Nation of Israel. It also reveals the great and eternal attributes of the God of the Bible.

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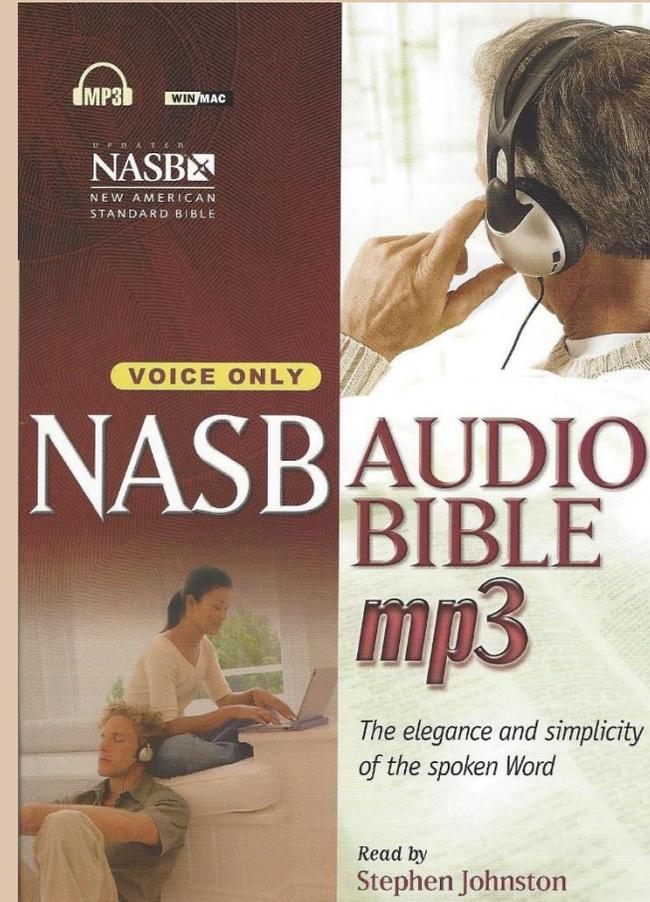
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From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section One

GENESIS 3





From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

SECTION OUTLINE TWO (GENESIS 3–5)

This section describes the corruption of all things.

From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

SECTION OUTLINE TWO (GENESIS 3–5)

I. THE TRANSGRESSION OF ADAM (3:1–24)

a. Adam's disobedience (3:1–6)

i. The treachery (3:1–5)

1. Satan begins by casting doubt on God's Word (3:1–3):
“Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?”

2. Satan concludes by denying God's Word (3:4–5): “ ‘You won't die!’ the serpent hissed ‘You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil.’ ”

ii. The tragedy (3:6): Both Eve and Adam disobey God and eat of the forbidden tree.

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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

This section begins with the introduction of the Tempter in verse 1a: Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field. The serpent is a reference to both a literal serpent and to Satan, for Satan used a literal serpent by indwelling the serpent for the purpose of communicating with the woman. The fact that the serpent and Satan are one is borne out in the New Testament in three places: II Corinthians 11:3 and Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. Satan did not merely take the form of a serpent, but indwelled a serpent and communicated with the woman through the serpent. The identification of Satan with the serpent is not merely the New Testament perspective but is also the rabbinic view.

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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

The common Hebrew word for serpent is nachash. The Hebrew word for “bronze” is nechoshet. So there is a linguistic connection between the Hebrew word for serpent and the Hebrew word for “bronze”; both come from the same root. For example, in Numbers 21:9, Moses made a bronze serpent, in Hebrew nachash nechoshet. Later, in II Kings 18:4, this bronze serpent became known as nechushtan, which comes from the same root. This connection of the serpent with bronze indicates that the snake appeared as a shiny or luminous one. This carried into the New Testament where Satan appears as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14). The root word for serpent also appears as a verb, and as a verb it means “to practice divination” or “to observe astrological signs” (Gen. 30:27, 44:5, 44:15; Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10). It is also used as a noun, and as a noun it means “divination” (Num. 23:23; 24:1). Ancient Near Eastern divination practices often included the use of a serpent.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

Among the beasts of the field that had been examined and named by Adam was one whose coloration was bright and beautiful and whose movements were smooth and graceful, a most attractive animal. Furthermore, this animal, the serpent, was more clever than any of the other animals. In her innocence, the woman was dazzled and soon led astray by this subtly attractive and deceptive creature.

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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

It may well be possible also that one of the factors that generated Satan's resentment against God was God's plan for mankind. People were to be uniquely "in the image and likeness of God," and also were to be able to reproduce their own kind, neither of which blessings was shared by Lucifer or the angels. This may be the reason why God cast Satan to the earth, instead of sending him immediately to the lake of fire, to enable him to tempt man to fall as he himself had fallen.

Perhaps he believed that, by capturing man's dominion and affection, along with the allegiance of his own angels, he might even yet be able to ascend back to heaven and dethrone God. Thus Lucifer, the "day-star," became Satan, the "adversary," or "accuser," opposing and calumniating God and all His purposes. And now he became "that old serpent," entering into the body of this "most clever" of all the "beasts of the field" in order to approach Eve with his evil solicitations.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

Demonic spirits evidently have the ability, under certain conditions, to indwell or “possess” either human bodies or animal bodies (Luke 8:33); and Satan on this occasion chose the serpent as the one most suitable for his purposes. There has been much speculation as to whether the serpent originally was able to stand upright (the Hebrew word, nachash, some maintain, originally meant “shining, upright creature”). This idea is possibly supported by the later curse (Genesis 3:14), dooming the serpent to crawl on its belly “eating” dust, and perhaps also by those structures in the snake’s skeleton which have been interpreted by evolutionists as “vestigial” limbs.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

There is also the unsolved question as to whether some of the Edenic animals, especially the serpent, may have originally had the ability to converse with man in some way. There is now, of course, a great gulf between the barks and grunts of animals and the intelligent, abstract, symbolic speech of man. On one occasion, God did, as it were, “open” the vocal organs of an animal, when He allowed Balaam’s ass to speak (Numbers 22:28). Some modern zoologists are now claiming the ability to teach chimpanzees a rudimentary form of speech.

On the other hand, it may simply be that Eve, in her innocence, did not yet know that the animals around her in Eden were incapable of speaking and so was not alarmed when the serpent spoke to her. One’s interpretation of this occurrence, in the complete absence of any further Scriptural explanation or amplification, may depend on the degree of his subconscious commitment to uniformitarianism.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

Apart from uniformitarian considerations, there may really be no reason why we should not assume that, in the original creation, the serpent was a beautiful, upright animal with the ability to speak and converse with human beings. Such an interpretation would at least make the verses in this passage easier to understand, even though it may make them harder to believe. The fact that great physiological changes took place in both the plant and animal kingdoms at the time of the curse, as well as in man himself, is obvious from Genesis 3:14–19, and it is obvious also that changes of such degree are quite within the capabilities of God to produce.

In cases of doubtful meanings of Scripture, one must not be dogmatic; but, at the same time, he should not forget the cardinal rule of interpretation; the Bible was written to be understood, by commoner as well as scholar. Therefore it should normally be taken literally unless the context both indicates a nonliteral meaning and also makes it clear what the true meaning is intended to be.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

It is at least possible (as well as the most natural reading) that the higher animals could originally communicate directly with man, who was their master. These were possibly the same as the animals to whom Adam gave names, and over whom man was to exercise friendly dominion.

It is further possible that all these animals (other than the birds) were quadrupeds, except the serpent, who had the remarkable ability, with a strong vertebral skeleton supported by small limbs, to rear and hold himself erect when talking with Adam or Eve. After the temptation and fall, God altered the vocal equipment of the animals, including the structure of the speech centers in their brains. He did this in order to place a still greater barrier between men and animals and to prevent further use of their bodies by demonic spirits to deceive men again in this fashion. The body of the serpent, in addition, was altered even further by eliminating his ability to stand erect, eye-to-eye with man as it were.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

Again it should be emphasized that the above interpretation is not intended dogmatically. The Bible is not explicit on these matters and such explanations no doubt are hard to accept by the “modern mind.” Nevertheless, they are not impossible or unreasonable in the context of the original creation and, indeed, appear to follow directly from the most natural and literal reading of the passage.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

The most important fact about sin is seen in the fall of the man, and the basis for understanding this is to note that it is nowhere even suggested that Adam fell through the deception of Satan. The woman did fall as a result of Satan's arguments. In fact, she fell with goodwill; for she had come to believe that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would make one wise—that was what the name signified after all—and she wanted both herself and her husband to enjoy that imagined blessing. That is why she gave the fruit to Adam. She wanted to help him if she could. Eve erred and sinned in her error.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

But her error, serious as it was, was not duplicated in the case of Adam, nor was it as reprehensible. Adam sinned out of pure rebellion against God.

We see this distinction in Paul's interpretation of the fall in 1 Timothy, where he writes, "Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (1 Tim. 2:14). This may be explained as follows. We must assume for a moment, erroneously, that Adam had sinned first and then the woman. We may suppose that God then came to the couple in the garden, saying, "What have you done? I told you not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and you have eaten of it." If that had taken place, the woman might have answered, "But you also created me to be a helper for my husband, indicating that I am to follow his lead. He is to be the head of our home. So when he ate of the tree, I properly followed him and ate also."



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

This is what the woman could have said if Adam had sinned first, and she would have had at least a partial excuse for her transgression. But, says Paul, in actual fact she sinned first and so was in the transgression as much as Adam.

But though Eve was in the sin she did not fall for the same reason. She was deceived; but Adam sinned in utter rebellion. We may remember here that God had placed Adam in the garden as lord of creation and had given him the fruit of all the trees of the garden, except one. He had said that Adam could eat of all the trees north, east, south, and west of where he stood; but one tree, one tree only, was forbidden to him. If he ate of it, he would die.



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Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

Adam, in full knowledge of what he was doing, looked at that one tree and said in effect, “I do not care if I am allowed to eat of all the trees north of here, east of here, south of here, and west of here. So long as that one tree stands in the garden as a symbol of my creaturehood, so long as it is there to remind me that I am not God, that I am not perfectly autonomous—so long as it is there, I hate it! So I will eat of it and die.”

This is why the Bible never places the blame for the fall of the race on the woman. Our jokes and much of our popular literature blame Eve for getting us into sin—it is another example of male chauvinism—but there is never a word of blame placed on Eve in Scripture. Instead we read, “For since death came through a man. ... In Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:21–22); “As sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin. ... By the trespass of the one man, death reigned. ... Through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners” (Rom. 5:12, 17, 19).



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

Another actor is now introduced, the Adversary of God. His Person and his history are not revealed here. The last Book of the Bible speaks of him as “the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan” (Rev. 12:9). Our Lord called him “the murderer from the beginning” and “the father of lies.” He used a creature of the field to deceive the woman and to ruin the restored creation by the introduction of sin. The word “Serpent” is in the Hebrew “Nachash,” which means “a shining one.” It is evident that this creature was not then a reptile like the serpent of to-day. The curse put the serpent into the dust. This creature Satan possessed and perhaps made still more beautiful so as to be of great attraction to the woman. He transformed himself in this subtle way, “The Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety” (2 Cor. 11:3), “And no marvel; for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). Of this marvellous Being having access to the Garden of Eden we read in Ezekiel 28:13.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

The treachery (3:1–5)

Some brand the opening verses of Genesis 3 as myth. If it were, all else in God's Word concerning Man and his redemption would collapse. Others look upon it as an allegory, but it is a historical fact and this revelation gives the only explanation of the origin of evil and its existence.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

Satan's Original State

Ezekiel 28:11–16 (NASB95) — Again the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. “You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. “You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. “You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you. “By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

Satan's Original State

Ezekiel 28:17–19 (NASB95) — “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you. “By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you. “All who know you among the peoples Are appalled at you; You have become terrified And you will cease to be forever.”



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

Satan's Original State

Logic dictates that Satan is a creature and that he was created without sin. The Bible teaches that God created all beings (John 1:3; Col. 1:16-17) including angels (Psa. 148:2-5). Logic also dictates that God created all beings without sin. Thus, the creation and sin of Satan could be deduced without any special Scripture. However, Ezekiel 28 does seem to speak specifically of Satan's origin. If Ezek. 28:11-19 does not refer to Satan, then the passage is inexplicable. Twice he is called a cherub (vv. 14 and 16), and Ezek. 28:15 speaks of blamelessness "from the day you were created." Satan is also linked with angels in other texts (e.g., Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7, 9). Like them he is a created being.



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Satan's Original State

Being an angel, Satan initially shared in the characteristics of all angels, as developed in the preceding chapter. (He has, of course, lost his holiness; but he retains much of the strictly natural, as opposed to moral, characteristics of angels). He was created a sinless spirit being with superhuman intelligence and power. Even now Satan is beautiful (2 Cor. 11:14-15) and powerful (Jude 9).



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Satan's Original State

Not only is Satan described as an angel, he seems to be in a special class of angels (anointed cherub) and perhaps was the greatest of angels. Ezekiel 28 teaches that he was a guarding cherub (vv. 14 and 16), that he was perfect in wisdom and beauty (v. 12), that he lived in paradise (v. 13), and that he was created sinless (v. 15). Although Michael wins his battle with the devil (Rev. 12:7ff.), he seems to respect the devil as his equal or even his superior in power (Jude 9). Satan was and probably still is the most intelligent and powerful of created beings.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

Nature of Satan's First Sin

Even if there were no direct Scripture on Satan's first sin, we would still have to assume by logic such a sin. However, Ezekiel 28 probably gives some specific information. It is the only text in the Bible that clearly details Satan's first sin. Ezek. 28:17 teaches that the first sin was basically pride (see also 1 Tim. 3:6). "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor..." [Ezek. 28:17].



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Part One: Section Two

Consequences of Satan's First Sin

Ezek. 28:16-17 teaches that Satan was cast “from the mountain of God” and cast “to the ground.” His pride caused him to be removed from his duties as a cherub that guards God’s presence. In this sense Satan “fell” from heaven. However, Satan still has some limited access to heaven, not for service but for purposes of communication (Job 1:6, 2:1; Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10). He will make a war in heaven during the Tribulation (Rev. 12:7ff.) and will fall from heaven in the fullest sense of that phrase at that time. Satan definitely has fallen in a moral sense. Yet, because the term fall may indicate a future total exclusion from heaven, the phrase, the fall of Satan, has been avoided in reference to his original sin.



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Part One: Section Two

Satan's First Sin and Consequences for Angels

We know for certain that Satan is the leader of other wicked angels (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7-9). Rev. 12:4 hints that one third of the angels followed Satan. There is little direct information on the subject. We know other angels have sinned. We know that Satan is now their leader. Based upon the assumption that angels would not have sinned after they saw the consequences of Satan's first sin, it is best to infer that other angels participated with Satan in his first sin because of his enticement.



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Part One: Section Two

Time of Satan's First Sin

If angels were created along with material creation, as Ex. 20:11 and Psa. 148:2-5 imply, then Satan was created on the first creative day before the earth was made (Job 38:7). His first sin must have occurred before the serpent tempted Eve in Gen. 3:1. Thus, Satan sinned sometime between the first creative day and man's temptation. Throughout the creative week God called His Creation good; and, at the close of the sixth day He evaluated Creation as "very good" (Gen. 1:31). It is harder to view Creation as being "very good" if it was already marred by a cosmic conflict of great proportions. The best time to place Satan's first sin is after the creative week but before the temptation of Eve. We do not know the duration between the creation of man and the fall. (The "gap theory" should be respectfully declined as being neither good Hebrew nor good science.)

From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

The tragedy (3:6)

Satan held out to them the promise of divinity—knowing good and evil. With this the work of Satan was finished. The woman was then left to her natural desires and physical appetites. The word for desirable (neḥmād, v. 6) is related to a word that appears later in the command, “You shall not covet” (ṭaḥmōd, Ex. 20:17). Physical practicality (good for food), aesthetic beauty (pleasing to the eye), and the potential for gaining wisdom—to be “in the know”—these draw a person over the brink once the barrier of punishment is supposedly removed.

The results, of course, were anticlimactic. The promise of divine enlightenment did not come about. They both ate and saw, but they were spoiled by so doing. They were ill at ease with one another (mistrust and alienation) and they were ill at ease with God (fearful and hiding from Him). Satan's promises never come true. Wisdom is never attained by disobeying God's Word. Instead the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7).



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Part One: Section Two

The tragedy (3:6)

the relationship that God had established with man, which is the focus of the creation story, is broken. We can gain a great insight into human nature from this story. Adam and Eve's behavior as recorded here has been repeated by every one of their descendants.

“It is hardly too much to say that this chapter is the pivot of the Bible With the exception of the fact of Creation, we have here the record of the most important and far-reaching event in the world's history—the entrance of sin.”

“. . . Genesis does not explain the origins of evil; rather, the biblical account, if anything, says where evil does not have its source. Evil was not inherent in man nor can it be said that sin was the consequence of divine entrapment. The tempter stands outside the human pair and stands opposed to God's word.”



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

The tragedy (3:6)

Having succumbed to temptation Eve disobeyed God's will. Whereas Satan initiated the first two steps, he let Eve's natural desires (her flesh) carry her into his trap.

All three avenues of fleshly temptation are present in verse 6.

1. She saw that the tree was "good for food" (the lust of the flesh: the desire to do something contrary to God's will, i.e., eat the tasty fruit).
2. It was a "delight to the eyes" (the lust of the eyes: the desire to have something apart from God's will, i.e., possess the beautiful fruit).
3. It was "desirable to make one wise" (the pride of life: the desire to be something apart from God's will, i.e., as wise as God). It was the quest for wisdom that led Eve to disobey God.¹⁷⁸

Eve saw, coveted, and took the fruit (cf. Josh. 7:21; 2 Sam. 11:2–4). We think, then lust, then act.



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Part One: Section Two

The tragedy (3:6)

“The proposition that an adult can gaze at anything is ludicrous and naive, for gazing is too often followed by desiring and sinning.”

In view of Jesus' statement that a lustful look is as sinful as an overt act of sin (Matt. 5:27–28), did Eve commit the first sin when she desired the forbidden fruit? Sinful desires are sinful, but temptations are not sins until we respond by giving in to them. Eve did this when she ate the fruit. Until she did that, she was only experiencing temptation.



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Part One: Section Two

The tragedy (3:6)

Dr. Harry Ironside used to quote a man from Wales. He answered in response to a question about how to avoid temptation, "I can't keep the birds from flying over my head, but I can keep them from nesting in my hair."

"Here is the essence of covetousness. It is the attitude that says I need something I do not now have in order to be happy."

Ignorance or disregard of God's word makes one very vulnerable to temptation (Ps. 119:11). These conditions produce distrust, dissatisfaction, and finally disobedience. Failure to appreciate God's goodness leads to distrust of His goodness. God's prohibitions as well as His provisions are for our good.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

The tragedy (3:6)

“The root of sin should be understood. The foundation of all sin lies in man’s desire of self-assertion and his determination to be independent of God. Adam and Eve chafed under the restriction laid upon them by the command of God, and it was in opposition to this that they asserted themselves, and thereby fell. Man does not like to be dependent upon another, and subject to commands upon another, and subject to commands from without. He desires to go his own way, to be his own master; and as a consequence he sins, and becomes ‘lord of himself, that heritage of woe.’”



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Part One: Section Two

The tragedy (3:6)

God has always asked people to believe and trust His word that His will for us will result in our blessing. However, Satan has always urged us to have experiences that will convince us that we can obtain even greater blessings. He says, "Try it; you'll like it!" But God says, "Trust me, and you'll live." Satan's appeal to get us to experience something to assure ourselves of its goodness directly contradicts God's will for us. It is the way of sight rather than the way of faith.



From God's Creation to God's Nation

Part One: Section Two

The tragedy (3:6)

Some commentators have interpreted eating the forbidden fruit as a euphemism for having sexual intercourse. They say that the original sin was a sexual sin. However the text makes such an interpretation impossible.

- 1. Eve sinned first (v. 6).**
- 2. Eve sinned alone (v. 6).**
- 3. God had previously approved sex (1:28).**