

Frailty

Genesis 3:1-7

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A. Misaligned (v. 1):

1. Was more crafty — satan is forever trickier for evil purposes and would do anything to achieve it.

a) Later exegesis will identify the serpent with satan or the devil. In light of later Scripture truths, we are justified in concluding that the serpent was a specially chosen instrument of satan for this test. In Rev 12:9, the tempter is called “the great dragon ... that old serpent, called the Devil and satan” (cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IX). The word *nāḥāsh*, meaning *to make a hissing sound*, undoubtedly refers to the kind of being known to us as a serpent. Paul declares that satan fashions himself into “an angel of light” (II Cor 11:14). He chose the craftiest, the most subtle, and the most cautious of the animals and took full control of him for his disastrous work. Jesus said of satan: “He is a liar, and the father thereof” (Jn 8:44, ASV; cf. Rom 16:20; II Cor 11:3; I Tim 2:14; Rev 20:2).

b) In John 8:44, Jesus called satan a murderer and “the father of lies.” He also called him “the evil one” (Matt. 13:19) and “the prince of this world” (John 12:31). Paul and John also called the devil “the evil one” (1 Thes. 3:3; 1 John 3:12), and Paul said satan was “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4), the ruler of the world system (Eph. 2:2), and the leader of demonic forces of evil (Eph. 6:10–12).^[1]

c) In short, satan is no pushover, and God’s people must be careful not to give him a foothold in their lives (Eph. 4:27). That’s why we’re studying God’s Word and seeking to understand the strategy of satan (2 Cor. 2:11).^[2]

2. The Lord God had made – It is interesting to see the Lord God meaning it is the Lord who has all authority and power to create out of nothing the Garden (Colossians 1:15-17), as well as God who is sovereign and is over all of creation in contrast to satan who is crafty and evil moving about to achieve his wicked purposes in God's creation.

a) During this entire conversation, God is silent. He has already spoken.

3. The Lord God had made – Evil is present even in the presence of the field that God created. satan could have entered the Garden but found a place to establish his evil agenda. He did not need directions and knew when to appear and in what form.

4. And he said to the woman – satan did not need to be invited to the tree, just like he did not need to be invited to come to Cain when Cain contemplated killing his brother (Genesis 4:7). satan is always alert to the opportunity to influence us (Ephesians 4:26-27; 1 Peter 5:8-11).

5. And he said to the woman – satan did not call Eve by her name or that she is the wife of Adam. The text says woman, which means Eve decided to act independently of Adam. She is called woman before she is given to Adam. Not until she and Adam became intimate was Eve called his wife (Genesis 2:22-25).

a) The word of the Lord brought life and order; the serpent's word brought chaos and death. Truth is older than falsehood; God's word came before satan's lies.

6. And he said to the woman – satan did not ask the Lord God's permission to talk to Eve even though he is in the Garden that the Lord God made and reigns supreme. His intent was to talk with the woman as long as he could.

7. And he said to the woman – Like in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, when we place ourselves in positions outside God's will, we also avail ourselves to become influenced by satan (Colossians 3:1-4).

a) *satan questioned God's Word (v. 1b)*. Second Corinthians 11:3 clarifies that satan's target was Eve's mind and that his weapon was deception. By questioning what God said, satan raised doubts in Eve's mind concerning the truthfulness of God's Word and the goodness of God's heart. "Do you really mean that you can't eat from *every tree*?" was the import of the subtle question. "If God really loved you, He would be much more generous. He's holding out on you!" satan wanted Eve to forget that God had told Adam (who had told her) that they could eat freely of the trees of the Garden. For their own good, there was a prohibition: they didn't dare eat from the forbidden tree in the middle of the Garden (Gen. 2:15–17).^[3]

8. God has said –The manner in which satan is saying 'God has said' is implicitly saying; "what he is saying to the woman is completely what God said to her through Adam.'

a) He insinuated a doubt as to her sense of the divine will and appeared as an angel of light (2Co 11:14), offering to lead her to the true interpretation. It was evidently from her regarding him as specially sent on that errand that she received him as a heavenly messenger instead of being startled by the reptile's speaking.

9. God has said satan knew about the conversation and had explicit knowledge of every word said to Adam and Eve. He did not need Eve to tell him or interpret the conversation to him.

10. God has said – God told Adam about the tree of "good and evil" (1:9), and God repeated it once He placed Adam in the Garden, which he did not do until it was time for Eve to be brought to Adam.

11. God has said – Just like in the case of the temptation of Christ, even though satan knew of everything God said, he did not communicate it in the manner God told it to Adam and Eve (1:9, 17).

12. God has said – Notice satan did not talk with the person God communicated with; he spoke to Eve. Eve is someone Adam was totally impressed and excited about

(2:23-25). Sometimes how we become about our marriage can cause us to place the marriage above the Word of God, leading us to be deceived (Ananias and Sapphira; Acts 5:1-6).

B. Human Wisdom? (vs. 2-6):

1. And the woman said – Woman engaged with satan with no intent of ever stopping to talk to him.

a) Compare 3:2–3 with 2:16–17, and you’ll see that she omitted the word “freely,” added the phrase “nor shall you touch it” (NKJV), and failed to say that God “commanded” them to obey. Note, too, that Eve copied the devil further when she spoke of “God” (Elohim) and not “the Lord [Jehovah] God,” the God of the covenant. Finally, she said, “lest you die”—a possibility—instead of “You shall surely die”—an actuality. So, she *took from* God’s Word, added to God’s Word, and *changed* God’s Word, which is a serious offense indeed (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:19). She was starting to doubt God’s goodness and truthfulness.^[4]

2. And the woman said – Eve never said satan, so she may not have known who satan was, but she sure knew what God said.

3. And the woman said – Knowing the person delivering the message is unimportant. It is knowing the message.

4. From the fruit of the trees in the garden we may eat – Eve continuously repeats the correct message that God said as if to refute what satan is saying, which only reinforces that she clearly understood what God said to Adam. This also highlights that Adam had done his job to communicate what God said to him.

5. In the middle of the Garden – Notice God did not put the tree in some obscure place. The tree was constantly something they needed to confront so that they make a willful decision to obey Christ. There are hundreds of churches, radio programs, and thousands of books readily available.

6. God said – The Lord is not mentioned because Eve understood that God is sovereign, and He reigns supreme overall, and what He said was the complete message that must be respected.

7. Or touch it – God did not say touch it. Eve was very conscious of the importance of God's message.

8. You surely will die – Eve clearly understood that God emphatically said she would open herself to be executed. The first death is murder (Genesis 4:6-8) because the perpetrator is a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). Man was not just going to die physically; Adam introduced a murderer to the world.

a) Eve disparaged the privileges, added to the prohibition, and weakened the penalty—all seen by contrasting her words (Gen. 3:3) with God's original commands (2:16–17). After satan heard this, he blatantly negated the penalty of death that God had given (3:4). satan is a liar from the beginning (John 8:44), and this is his lie: one can sin and get away with it. But death is the penalty for sin (Gen. 2:17).

9. And the serpent said – satan continuously sought to convince Eve that she misunderstood God.

10. And the serpent said – Once we clearly understand what the Word of God says, we must hold to it and never move to common sense (Proverbs 3:5-6; Ephesians 4:27-20).

11. You surely will die - satan continuously sought to convince Eve that there was no way she would ever be murdered execution-style.

12. God knows – satan speaks for God while recognizing He is supreme and is over all. He cannot deny who God is; he just denies what God says.

13. God knows – satan tells Eve that the issue is not good and evil; the issue is that God understands that Eve would know just as much as God knows.

14. Will be open - Eve's understanding would be completely like God's. This is the same mindset that got satan kicked out of heaven (Isaiah 14:14).

15. God knowing good and evil – satan sought to convince Eve that her knowledge would be so comprehensive she would have a sense of what is pleasant, excellent, and practically beneficial as well as what is unpleasant, unethical, and immoral. Her knowledge would be comprehensive.

16. When the woman saw – Eve carefully inspected the fruit and came to a complete understanding that it looks the same compared to all the other fruit she eats.

a) She took a new step into the field of self-deception. She not only wanted delicious and attractive food, but she was desirous of power. She believed this fruit would satisfy all her desires. The next step was automatic and immediate. She took ... and did eat. The tempter was not needed **after that moment.** Eve took up his work and presented the well-recommended fruit to her husband, and **he did eat.**

17. Good for food – From everything Eve had already eaten in the garden, the fruit seemed just as pleasant and beneficial as food. Common sense erases faith.

a) The sight of sin itself is not sin, but that is where the pathway that leads to sin embarks. Her second step was a desire in that direction. The sight alone is no crime, but to desire what we have innocently seen, if it cannot be ours, is sin (Deut. 5:21; Matt. 5:28; James 1:13, 14; 1 John 2:15–17). Eve's third step on the pathway to sin went beyond coveting to indulging. She took what was not rightfully hers according to the prohibition of God. Desiring the forbidden fruit was a covert sin; taking and eating it was an overt and active sin. The final step was the involvement of another in the sin: she gave to her husband. There is no such thing as private sin; every sin affects someone else. Eve's sin affected Adam, and consequently, Adam's sin affected the entire race. The whole human race sinned in Adam, for "through one man sin entered the world" (Rom. 5:12). Sin always involves others and thus becomes compounded. Other striking examples of these same steps on the pathway to sin can be found in the lives of Achan (Josh. 7:21) and David (2 Sam. 11:1–5, 15, 24).

18. Delight – Eve could clearly see that the fruit was desirable and would provide the pleasure as anything else she had eaten.

a) Satan's subtle encouragement was for Eve to ask herself, "What do I think?" No doubt, she only observed that the tree was beautiful and good for food. No created thing could be bad in itself, for God had created it. But she became the standard-maker. Sin, in this case, was the wrong use of good things—her own will and the beautiful, though forbidden, tree.

19. Desirable to make one wise – Eve lusted (sought something so delightful it did not matter if God did not allow it) for the fruit that would provide a comprehensive knowledge of good and evil. She believes this would create out of nothing the ability for her to have a practical understanding that can make her prosperous.

a) The word for desirable (*neḥmāḏ*, v. 6) is related to a word that appears later in the command, "You shall not covet" (*taḥmōḏ*, 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.

20. She took – Once satan conformed her mind to his way of thinking, it was still her decision whether she would disobey God. Eve willfully decided to conform to her own understanding.

21. She also gave to her husband – Notice satan never talked to Adam and never called Eve, his wife. He was not about to remind her of God's order.

a) Because she did not die, she gave it to her husband. And he ate: Adam sinned with his eyes wide open. He did not even ask a question. He knew as well as she that the fruit was forbidden. Adam and Eve had now broken faith with the Lord, forever changing the world.

22. She also gave to her husband – Eve continuously pressed Adam to permanently make her decision their new way of life. This is what giving in the imperfect tense means.

23. She also gave to her husband – Notice when Eve gave Adam the fruit, there is no conversation where she is seeking to convince Adam like it was with satan and her. It seems that Adam heard everything and was just as convinced as Eve was that this was the way to go.

C. Restructured (v. 7):

1. They knew – They both continuously experienced a complete understanding of what is good and evil. Notice satan is gone once Eve is convinced this is the way to go.

a) Eve was deceived, but Adam sinned willfully with his eyes wide open (1 Tim. 2:14). This is why Paul points to Adam, not Eve, as the one who brought sin and death into the human race (Rom. 5:12–21). “For as in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:22).^[5]

2. They knew they were naked – Evil removed their innocence. Two kids can shower and have no problems, but as their eyes open, they are suddenly naked.

a) They saw their nakedness, spiritual as well as physical. And then shame and fear were born. When Adam and Eve realized they were out of touch with God, a terrible loneliness overwhelmed them. Remorse and its inevitable miseries followed. Their loss of faith had subjected them to all these attendant woes. They hastily made aprons or *girdles* to provide some measure of concealment as they sought a remedy for their bewilderment, loneliness, and guilt.^[6]

3. Made themselves loin coverings - When sin is present, the nature of a relationship changes. When Adam first saw Eve, their nakedness created intimacy and no shame (2:22-25). However, after sin, their intimacy changed, affecting how they saw each other.

- a) 3:7. fig leaf significance. Fig leaves are the largest found in Canaan and could provide limited covering for the shamed couple. **The significance of the fig's use may lie in its symbolism of fertility.** By eating the forbidden fruit, the couple have set in motion their future role as parents and as cultivators of fruit trees and grain.^[1]
4. The fact that the serpent is condemned to its belly says that the serpent could have been standing straight up talking to Eve.

[1] Wiersbe, W. W. (1998). *Be basic* (p. 59). Chariot Victor Pub.

[2] Wiersbe, W. W. (1998). *Be basic* (p. 59). Chariot Victor Pub.

[3] Wiersbe, W. W. (1998). *Be basic* (pp. 60–61). Chariot Victor Pub.

[4] Wiersbe, W. W. (1998). *Be basic* (p. 61). Chariot Victor Pub.

[5] Wiersbe, W. W. (1998). *Be basic* (p. 63). Chariot Victor Pub.

[6] Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Ge 3:1–7). Chicago: Moody Press.

[7] Matthews, V. H., Chavalas, M. W., & Walton, J. H. (2000). *The IVP Bible background commentary: Old Testament* (electronic ed., Ge 3:1–7). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.