

THE SERPENT

Rev. Thomas L. Kline

Lessons: Genesis 3.

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made” (Genesis 3:1).

Can you imagine how beautiful the Garden of Eden must have been? If you close your eyes and picture the most beautiful place you have ever seen, that would be something like the place where the Lord put the first people He created. The Garden of Eden was not a small garden, but it probably had many fields and meadows where the first people could live. The Lord placed all the most beautiful things in this garden—beautiful trees and all kinds of flowers. Of course, the Lord also made a river to flow through the garden to give it water and keep it beautiful. Finally, the Lord made all kinds of wondrous animals to keep the people. The Lord did all these things for one reason—because He loves all people, and the Lord wanted to make them as happy as possible.

But there was one thing the Lord told these people *not* to do. Do you remember what that one thing was? He told them not to eat the fruit of a certain tree. He told Adam and Eve that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they did, they would have to be taken out of the beautiful garden. They would have disobeyed the Lord.

Do you think that Adam and Eve would ever want to disobey the Lord? This would have probably been the last thing they would ever think of doing, because they loved the Lord. But one day a serpent (which is the same thing as a snake) came up to Eve and tried to tempt her. The snake talked to Eve, and he tried every way to make Eve disobey the Lord. The serpent told Eve that it really wouldn't be such a bad thing to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. In fact, he told her that she would be as a god - knowing both good and evil. Do you think these things that the serpent told Eve were true?

But Eve listened to the serpent. She ate the fruit of the tree, and she gave the fruit to Adam as well. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed the Lord, the Lord had to cast them out of the garden. The Lord had to make them live in a place which was not so beautiful, and He put an angel guard by the entrance of the Garden of Eden, so that Adam and Eve could never return.

Now did you know that there is something in this story which the Lord wants to tell you? This is true of every story in the Lord's Word there is always something special about your life in each story.

Have you ever been tempted to do something you really didn't want to do? Maybe your parents told you not to do something, and you have wanted to obey your parents, but for some reason a bad thought or a bad idea came into your mind. Before you knew it, you were doing what was wrong. Maybe your parents told you not to eat a piece of candy before dinner, because it would spoil your appetite. You could really want to obey your parents, but a bad thought or a bad idea could come into your mind, and tell you to go ahead and eat the candy. It might tell you that your parents won't find out, or that it really will not spoil your appetite. If you listen to these bad thoughts, sometimes you will find yourself doing exactly what they say. These bad thoughts are just like the serpent tempting Eve. They try to make you do something you really don't want to do. Eve didn't want to disobey the Lord, but as soon as she just began to listen to the serpent, she soon found herself doing that which was wrong.

These bad thoughts that come into your mind are just like the serpent in the story. But why do you think the Lord pictures these bad thoughts as a serpent? Have you ever seen how a snake crawls upon the ground? A snake can slither through the grass so close to the ground that sometimes you cannot see the snake until you are very close. If you were walking through a field where you knew there was a snake, you would walk very carefully, watching where you put each foot, so you would not come too close to the snake. It is the same with evil thoughts in your mind. The Lord is telling you in this story that evil thoughts and ideas have a way of sneaking into your mind so quietly that sometimes you don't even know they are there until you find yourself listening to them. The Lord is telling you to be careful. He is telling you that as soon as you even begin to have a bad thought in your mind to turn away from it quickly as if it were a sly serpent. When you think that a bad thought is close to your mind, turn away from it quickly, think about something else, and don't listen to the thought. In this way the Lord will help keep you from those things that are wrong.

These are the things the Lord wishes to tell you in this story of Adam and Eve. The reason the Lord tells you these things is so the Lord can lead your mind back to a beautiful paradise like the Garden of Eden. Remember, the Lord loves everyone He has created, and He wishes to bring everyone to heaven. He wishes to make each person an angel in heaven. This is the reason the Lord tells us how to turn our minds toward His kingdom. This is why the Lord has given us His Word.