

# Temptation

by Chuck Smith

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*Chuck Smith's sermon on temptation explores how Satan deceives believers by questioning God's Word and appealing to their desires.*

**Duration:** 25:22

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:16-17, Genesis 3:1, Genesis 3:6, Genesis 3:15, Genesis 3:21, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 22:20

**Topics:** "Temptation"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith teaches on the subject of temptation, focusing on the fall of man as described in Genesis chapter 3. He highlights the cunning nature of the serpent and how it deceived Eve by questioning God's command not to eat from the tree of knowledge. Pastor Chuck explains the three suggestions that Satan presented to Jesus in the wilderness, which were similar to the temptations faced by Eve. He emphasizes the importance of waiting for God's timing and not giving in to immediate fulfillment without following God's path. The sermon encourages listeners to study the Bible and seek wisdom from its teachings every day.

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## Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you  
With His Spirit and His love  
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul  
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you  
And His Spirit like a dove  
Will descend upon your life  
And make you whole  
Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.  
And he said to the woman, Has God indeed said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?  
And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.

Now, Satan coming in the form of a serpent. Now, the word translated serpent in the Hebrew is the shining one. Whether or not it was an actual snake as we think of snakes today, it really is difficult to ascertain.

It surely is not the snake that we have today. Because this creature was cursed that it might go on its belly, but in the garden it probably had a method of propulsion of itself probably through the air. Now, there are suggestions that it was actually in the form of a dragon.

Where do we get the idea of dragon? Now, the Bible speaks of dragons. Where do we get the concept or idea of dragons? It could be that at one time there was such a creature upon the earth, now extinct. And maybe as a result of the curse, maybe it couldn't survive in the dust of the earth on its belly without that

other method of propulsion through the air.

It is interesting that it is a name for Satan, the great dragon. And so the literal Hebrew, though, is a shining one. And thus Satan so often disguises himself as a shining one.

I think that many times we make a serious mistake in our concept of Satan as thinking of him as being some horribly repulsive figure. The classic idea of Milton, a pitchfork, and dressed in red with horns and a glaring type of a look upon his face. We think, oh, man, I'll never be susceptible to him.

But he comes as an angel of light in order to deceive. He comes as something attractive, something beautiful. And so when Satan comes and brings temptation, it isn't some horrible, ugly, repulsive thing that we would naturally be revulsed by it.

But it always appears to be, oh, so beautiful, so attractive. Wow, I would like that, you know. And he makes sin to look very attractive and very inviting.

So it is important that you dismiss from your mind the classic concept of Satan as some horrible, ugly, repulsive creature. And realize that that is not the way he approaches you. He came as a shining one to Eve, one who was more cunning than any of the beasts of the field.

He came, first of all, questioning the Word of God. Now, I would like to suggest that Satan has not ceased that type of an attack. Satan is still questioning the Word of God, trying through the questions to cast doubt on the Word of God and on the nature of God.

Hath God said that ye shall not eat of all of the trees that are in the garden? Now, the question was designed to sort of suggest there's an unfairness with God because he's holding back something from you, something that is very desirable. And it really isn't fair for God to hold back from you that which is desirable. And so he comes questioning the Word of God.

Satan today comes questioning the Word of God. Hath God said? And there is always that challenge of God's Word, God's command. Did God say? And in the question itself, the intimation of unfairness, God's holding back from you something that's really desirable.

And there is that suggestion of the unfairness of God in the Word of God. Of course, today he has expanded that hath God said to really, did God really say that or not? And the modern Bible critics, the liberals, the modernists, the infidels, they question whether or not the Word of God is indeed the Word of God. And then these brilliant intellectuals will tell you which is God's Word and which isn't.

And they will try to divide the Bible for you as the inspired and uninspired portions. But the moment any man stands up to tell you which scriptures are inspired and which are not inspired, he then replaces the authority of God and he becomes the authority. God's Word is no longer authoritative.

You can't trust it all. So I'll tell you which ones you can trust. Well, I'm now the authority and you're trusting in me.

Look out, you're in big trouble. You trust in any man, you're in big trouble. So Satan is still.

Well, there are three basic areas of attack of Satan. He's always attacked the Word of God. He's always attacked the deity of Jesus Christ.

And he's always attacked the work of the Holy Spirit. These three areas, constant attack by Satan. The Word of God, the deity of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit.

The woman said to the serpent, and there she made her first mistake, entering into a dialogue with Satan. The moment you enter into a dialogue with Satan, you're opening the door for trouble. The moment you open your mind to begin to entertain a suggestion of Satan, getting into a dialogue over issues where God has spoken specifically, you're opening the door for some real problems.

The woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die. Now, she's not really quoting exactly what God said. God said to them that they should not eat of it, and in the day that they ate of it, they would surely die.

She didn't make that plain. She said, lest ye die. And, of course, she added to what God had said by declaring, nor shall you touch it.

Now, there was nothing recorded of God saying you aren't to touch it. He just said you're not to eat it, or you will surely die. And she sort of changes it a little bit, but even slight changes of God's word can lead to some real difficulties.

And now Satan directly contradicts the word of God, and he said to her, you will not surely die. Satan knew what God had said. God said thou shalt surely die.

She didn't quote God correctly. She just said, lest we die. But Satan, quoting more correctly, said thou surely will not die.

That is, in the contradiction, he comes right against what God had said. Thou shalt surely die. Thou shalt not surely die.

And so there is, first of all, the questioning of the word of God, and then the contradicting of the word of God. And Satan, again, follows the same tactics, questioning God's word, contradicting God's word, and then defaming God's character. For Satan went on to say, for God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

Now in that, Satan was suggesting that God's motive for forbidding them to eat of that tree is that he was jealous and fearful that they would become like him. And so God is withholding something from you that is desirable, that you should have. And the reason why he's withholding it is because God is concerned and worried that you're going to be like him, knowing good and evil.

So you have now the basis for temptation. And these are the tactics that Satan follows to the present day. When he comes to us to tempt us, and the challenging of the word of God, questioning of the word of God, the challenging, contradicting, and then the challenging of the nature and the character of God.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree that is desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. And she also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. John, in summing up the world through which Satan comes to us to tempt us, said all that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is bound up in this temptation here.

The lust of the flesh, good for food. The lust of the eye, hey, it was luscious looking. And it was desired to make her wise as God, the pride of life, I'm going to be like God.

And appealing to her. And the Bible tells us that there are three forces against us working in concert, and they are the world, the flesh, and the devil. And here we find all three working against Eve.

Her flesh, Satan's temptation, using the world around her as the area of temptation, the fruit that was forbidden. Now, the question arises, why, oh why would God put this tree there to begin with? Why would God allow Satan free to tempt her? Would not it have been better had God just not placed this tree there and there be no opportunity for temptation? How would God know that you truly loved Him unless you had a choice? How would God know that you truly wanted to obey Him unless you had a choice? And how can you have a choice if there isn't something to choose? So, choice is necessary. Made in the image of God, self-governing.

But there's got to be something to choose. God placed the tree. It had to be attractive, it had to be desirable, or else, you know, there's really no choice involved either.

I mean, you know, if it was just an ugly looking thing and was bitter and sour and all, all the temptation of the world wouldn't get you to eat because it's so ugly. You know, I want to eat that ugly thing. And so it had to be pleasant to look at.

It had to look very luscious. And there had to be that stimulation to the pride. Hey, it's going to make you wise like God.

It was all there. Now, as we look at the temptations here, we find that they follow exactly the same pattern when he came to Jesus. The first suggestion, why don't you command the stone to be made bread? Coming to Jesus when he is hungry after a 40-day fast.

The suggestion is, by abiding by the laws of God, God is withholding from you something that you need and something that's desirable. Why don't you move outside of the law of God and use your power and turn that stone into bread? God's withholding something from you that you need that's good. When he took him to the pinnacle of the temple and told him to jump, therein was the suggestion that you can violate the natural laws of God and not be hurt.

You won't die. Go ahead and jump. To Eve, go ahead and eat.

You won't die. To Jesus, you can violate God's law. That was the idea to Eve.

You can violate the law of God. You can go ahead and eat and you're not going to die. You can violate the law of God and not be hurt.

He's saying to Jesus, go ahead and jump. You can violate God's natural law. It won't hurt you.

Because he'll give his angels charge over you to keep you up, bear thee in all thy ways, lest you'll dash your foot against the stones down there. Go ahead. You can violate the law of God and not be hurt.

The third suggestion, as he took him to the high mountain and showed him the kingdoms of the world, the idea there is that you can have immediate fulfillment without following God's path to the cross. As with Satan and Eve, the idea was, you can go ahead and partake and have this knowledge of God. But God is fearful, holding back the immediate attainment and achievement.

So to Jesus, God's holding you back. You can have it now. God's holding you from it.

All you have to do is turn allegiance to me and I'll give it to you now. Wait for God, it's going to be postponed a couple thousand years. Why wait so long? I give it to you right now.

The lust of the flesh, Jesus was hungry. The lust of the eyes, the pride of life. I'll give you all the glory of the kingdoms of the earth.

One vast difference. Eve ate. Jesus didn't.

Now, God was talking of spiritual death. Satan confused by talking of natural death. They did not immediately die physically, but they did immediately die spiritually.

For by one man, sin entered the world, and death by sin. So that death passed unto all men, for all sinned. So there was a spiritual death that took place, which is separation from God.

Now, the first consciousness of sin was that of shame. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves covering. So they had a sense of shame, a shame that they had not had before.

Now, in as much as many of the fossils from the antediluvian era show that the plant life on the earth was far more vigorous than after the flood. They have found asparagus ferns, which may grow to five feet in your yard if you feed them good. There are fossils of asparagus ferns some 90 feet tall.

So if asparagus ferns were growing 90 feet tall, I imagine a fig leaf was probably a pretty good covering. I mean, they were probably enough to cover yourself, just sewing one together, you know. We think of fig leaves today and we think, man, that's not much of a covering.

But think now in the terms of the antediluvian state of the vegetation and it was probably a very adequate covering. But they did sew them together, made themselves coverings. Shame and the endeavor to cover their guilt with their own works.

And so you have the beginning of religion. Man trying to cover his own guilt by his own works. We'll return with more on The Fall of Man in our next lesson as we continue our verse-by-verse study of Genesis.

And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you missed any part of today's message or perhaps you'd like to order a copy for that special friend or loved one, you can do so by simply contacting one of our customer service representatives and they'd be more than happy to assist you with the ordering details. And we'll have all the contact information in just a moment.

Now, as we close out today's program, we have a very special and enlightening resource that is a must-read for anyone concerned about the Church in the 21st century. Like cascading dominoes, the intentional departure from believing that the Bible is incapable of making a mistake is causing the biblically-based Church to plummet down the treacherous slippery slope of accommodation and compromise. Within the pages of this newly-released book entitled New Evangelicalism, author Paul Smith addresses many of the alarming issues associated with this destructive movement.

He answers questions like, Are there clear historical markers that identify this dreadful paradigm shift? Why have so many evangelicals identified themselves as New Evangelicals? How is the emergent Church push for globalization harmonizing with the New World Order in these prophetic last days? And of utmost

importance, can independent churches and denominations learn any lessons from the errors and mistakes of others? Addressing these questions with riveting case studies coupled with staggering and sobering documentation, the author unfolds the shocking progression of ideas that were birthed in a nest of aberrant Church beliefs. Find out the alarming facts of what is happening to the Church today by ordering a personal copy of *New Evangelicalism* by Paul Smith. Our toll-free number is 1-800-272-WORD and our customer service representatives can assist you from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time Monday through Friday.

Once again, you'll be asking for the book entitled *New Evangelicalism* by Paul Smith when you call 1-800-272-9673. And for those of you who still prefer to write, you can use our mailing address, which is The Word for Today, P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628. And be sure to include the call letters of this station with your correspondence.

And now, on behalf of The Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck Smith continues his verse-by-verse venture through the book of Genesis. That's right here on the next edition of *The Word for Today*.

Now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck Smith. May we now be doers of the Word and not hearers only because that's self-deception. You've got to put it into practice for it to have any value in your life.

Let the Spirit of God now minister to you its truth as He brings to your remembrance those things that we have studied and He enriches you in your walk and in your faith and in your life in Christ. May the Lord be with you and bless you. Give you a good week.

In Jesus' name. Join Pastor Chuck Smith as he journeys from Genesis to Revelation sharing insights and inspiration in his latest book, *Wisdom for Today*. This beautiful devotional contains 365 daily readings that will be a blessing and encouragement to every believer.

One reader writes, Pastor Chuck's new book, *Wisdom for Today*, has been such a blessing to me. Having a chance to share the wisdom he has gained through years of Bible study is a real treasure. Has life brought you questions? Are you seeking direction and understanding? Come alongside Pastor Chuck as he takes you on a journey from Genesis to Revelation.

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