

**Msg #166 of Scripture Beneath The Surface**  
*“Eating Knowledge of Good and Evil”*

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about the fruit that Eve ate in the Garden of Eden. I think this is something that just about everyone has thought about since time began. When the subject comes up, just about everyone refers to Adam and Eve eating the apple, and that's probably because the apple, at least in this country, is the most common overall fruit. People identify with the apple, because they are most familiar with it.

However, the fruit that Eve ate wasn't an apple. What she ate was knowledge. And specifically, what she ate was knowledge of good and evil. You see, apple trees bear apples, and peach trees bear peaches, and orange trees bear oranges, but the tree in the Garden of Eden that God had told Adam and Eve not to eat from was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It was a knowledge of good and evil tree, not an apple tree. Just as apple trees bear apples, a tree of the knowledge of good and evil bears knowledge of good and evil. What Eve did was to take some of the knowledge of good and evil from the knowledge of good and evil tree, and ate it.

Now, when we refer to Eve eating the fruit, she didn't actually eat it in a physical sense. Actually she partook of the tree. The Bible uses what we call symbolism, or, a figure of speech, to describe what Eve did. What Eve did was to ingest knowledge. She ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the same way we eat the bread of life when we read the Bible. When we eat the bread of life, we aren't really eating in a physical sense, we are eating in a symbolic sense, or, in a spiritual sense.

It's the same thing when we take communion. When the bread of communion is eaten, we are symbolically eating the bread of life, which represents the body of Christ. Jesus is the Word of God, and therefore he is the Bread of Life that came down from heaven. This is what Eve did when she was tempted by Satan. She ate spiritual bread, she ate knowledge. The tree was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, therefore the fruit that Eve ate from that tree was knowledge of good and evil.

Up until that time Adam and Eve did not have any knowledge of the concept that there was both good and evil. Up until that time they only knew good. But even then they couldn't describe their initial knowledge as good because there was nothing else to compare it with. In this world we compare everything. That's how we understand things. We know what the concept of hot means because we compare it with the concept of cold. We understand that a mattress is too soft because we can compare it with a mattress that is too hard. However, up until the time that Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they didn't know what good and evil was. They knew God, but they did not know he was good. They didn't know evil yet, so they could not compare their knowledge of God with their knowledge of Satan. Of course we Christians know that God is good. But we know that God is good because we know that Satan is bad. If we didn't know that evil existed, then we would have knowledge of God, but we wouldn't be able to describe God as good because we would have nothing to compare it with. And, describing something always uses comparisons. If you can't compare something with something else, then you can't really describe it.

Anyway, I hope you can grasp this and understand that what Eve ate was knowledge. Originally there was something that Adam and Eve didn't know about. They did not know that both good and evil existed. The concept of both good and evil existing was unknown to them. They had knowledge of God, but as yet did not have knowledge of Satan, so they could not understand yet that God was good.

So, enough of the explanation. I know it sounds like I'm beating this subject to death, but I want to make sure you understand that what Adam and Eve ate wasn't physical fruit, but was actually knowledge of a specific kind. They ate knowledge, because the tree was a tree of knowledge, and therefore the fruit that the tree bore was knowledge.

When Satan came to Eve, he tempted her to take knowledge from him that she had previously not taken. He wanted her to receive the knowledge that there was both good and also evil. Now, God had specifically told Adam and Eve not to eat of that particular tree. God had told them that they were not to partake of the knowledge of good and evil. They could partake of other knowledge in the Garden, but not of knowledge of good and evil.

Now, think of this. What Satan wanted Eve to do was to take knowledge that she wasn't supposed to have. Satan wanted her to receive knowledge of something that contained evil. The other fruit of the garden contained knowledge of other things, but Satan specifically tempted Eve to receive knowledge that not only contained good, but also contained evil. Of course, we know

where evil comes from. It comes from Satan, and his knowledge is based on lies. Satan is a liar. In fact the Bible tells us that Satan is the father of all liars. The lie is the knowledge that comes from Satan. Hebrews 6:18 refers to the impossibility of God being able to lie. In fact, the reason it is impossible for God to lie is that God is truth. Whatever comes from God is truth. When God speaks, he establishes truth. In fact, it is by using God's word as a comparison that we can recognize Satan's lies. God cannot lie. Therefore, whatever is not God's word is a lie.

So, what Eve was tempted with was untruth. She was tempted to partake of knowledge which included a lie. She was tempted to receive something that was not spoken by God and accept it as truth. Of course, this automatically introduced her to evil. It introduced Eve to an alternative. Instead of just accepting everything from God without question, she was being tempted to accept something else as truth. She was presented with an alternative to God's word.

Now think about this carefully, and I'll try to make it as simple as possible. I know this can be confusing, but it's also important. God's word is truth. Satan's word is a lie. Up until this time Adam and Eve only knew God's word, but Satan wanted them to also know his word. He tempted Eve to take knowledge from him instead of only having knowledge from God. Up to this point, the only thing Eve knew was God's word. She didn't look at it as true or false, but just that God would speak and she and Adam would listen and obey. There was no question to it up until this time. However, Satan wanted Eve to also take knowledge that was false. He wanted her to accept knowledge from him.

Now, here, let's try something. Let me give you a scenario, or at least try to describe what actually took place. This may help you understand what was going on. Think of it this way. Here's Eve in the Garden, and Satan comes along and gives her his spiel about how she ought to take knowledge from him as well as from God. And Eve replies that she can't take knowledge from him because she is only allowed to have knowledge of God. She can eat any of the fruit of the Garden, but she is not allowed to take knowledge that gives her the ability to see both good and evil because God told her that if she did that she would die. But Satan tells her that what God said was not true.

Now, do you get that? Do you understand what Satan was actually trying to do? In Genesis, chapter 3, verse 4, Satan tells Eve that what God said was not true. Satan said that when God told them that they would die if they ate knowledge of good and evil, he, God, was not speaking truth. Satan suggested, and get this concept, Satan suggested to Eve that she could take knowledge from him, Satan, that was contrary to what God had given them.

Now, we know that anything Satan says is a lie. Anything Satan tells us is contrary to the truth of God. However, what Satan wants us to believe is that some of what God says is not really true after all. But do you catch this? Satan's attempt, or his temptation, is to convince you in some way or other that what God says is not truth after all, but is actually a lie, that God was actually lying.

Now, if God's word was not 100% truth, then that would mean that God is also a liar. It would mean that he would no longer be considered as the establishment of truth. And that would also mean that truth could come from another source other than God. And that is exactly what Satan wanted Eve to believe. He wanted Eve to accept the possibility that God was not 100% truth, and that there was another alternative to God's word. In short, Satan wanted Eve to accept the possibility that Satan himself could be believed instead of believing God for everything.

The fruit, the knowledge, that Satan wanted Eve to partake of was that God is not the only authority. And I use the word, authority, because authority is what results when a person's word is established as truth. Satan was actually trying to get Eve to accept the possibility that God's word was not the final authority. And in the end, Eve accepted that. She accepted Satan's suggestion that God was not the only authority, and that God could be obeyed, or Satan could be obeyed. Satan had said, "no, you shall not surely die," and Eve had the choice of whether to accept that information from Satan, or to dismiss it. If she dismissed it, then to her God would remain the final authority. If she dismissed Satan's suggestion, his temptation, then God would still be the only one that she obeyed. However, if she did not dismiss Satan's temptation, but accepted it, now get this, if she accepted Satan's offer of another word to be obeyed instead of God's word, then God would no longer be the only one she obeyed, but she would also be obeying Satan.

When Eve was tempted, she still had not sinned. But as soon as she accepted Satan's suggestion that what God had said was not necessarily true and that Satan's own word was true in the place of God, she was actually obeying the directives of Satan in place of God. She became disobedient to God's word and obeyed Satan's word. This single fact brought her the knowledge of both good and evil. Up until that time she only knew that God's word was good, and that it was good to obey his word. But as soon as Eve accepted Satan's word instead of following God's word, she came into the knowledge of the two forces at war in the heavenlies. She became aware of both good and evil.

Up until this time she liked God, and looked to God as the complete authority. But now, she had an alternative. On the one hand she liked God's word, but on the other hand, she liked what Satan was saying. Suddenly she had two things to consider, and although on the one hand Satan's word sounded good to her, yet on the other hand God's word also sounded good to her. However, she couldn't have two things that were contrary and still call both of them good. Suddenly she was confronted with the concept that both Satan's word and God's word could not be good. She was suddenly put in the situation of realizing that one of these words were bad. One word was good and the other word was bad. Eve, without realizing it, had come into the knowledge of good and evil. She had come to realize that there could be two viewpoints, but that only one of them could be good for her. She didn't want to die, because that would be bad for her. But then, on the other hand, if Satan's word was true, then she wouldn't die after all, and so Satan's word would be good for her too. Suddenly, Eve had the knowledge of both good and evil.

You see, everyone knows that you can't have a war unless you have an enemy. And in the same sense, there is no such thing as an enemy unless there is opposition between two forces. And, there has to be more than one force that exists in order to have opposition to that force. So, God was one force, one power, and when Eve recognized and accepted Satan as another force, another power, then she became aware that there were two opposing forces, two opposing powers. She then knew that God's word was one force, but she also believed that Satan's word was another force. She actually began at that time to understand the principle of good and evil in the sense that both forces can't be right. If there is a conflict, such as the one Satan suggested to her concerning God's word, then she also knew that Satan's viewpoint was in opposition to God's viewpoint. This, in a nutshell, is what it means to know good and evil.

As humans we know what we like. We use the term 'good' to describe that which we like, and we use the term 'evil' to describe that which we don't like. What Eve did when Satan tempted her was to say to herself, "hmmmm, I think I like what this snake is telling me instead of what God is telling me." You see, Satan tempted her to look to him as the authority for this part of knowledge instead of looking to God for all of her knowledge. This put Satan in the driver's seat. This allowed Satan to become a god to Eve, because Eve obeyed Satan's word instead of obeying God's word. In essence, Eve put herself under the authority of Satan instead of remaining under the authority of God.

Now, take this next part very carefully, and don't jump to conclusions. Keep in mind the concept of being under God's authority, or under Satan's authority. To come under authority means that another person is in authority over you. This is why the historical perspective of a king's throne is up high. You mount up to the king's throne by steps, and the king sits above the people in his court to demonstrate his authority. To have someone over you means that, in the technical sense, you have been covered over and cannot be seen. You are hidden, while at the same time the one who covers you is seen. Actually, this means that your covering is the authority over you, and you are hidden while they are revealed. This is why the Bible describes the man as being the covering for the woman. It is also why the Bible describes God as being our covering. When we give God authority over us, he becomes our covering. Now, stay with me on this next part, and like I said, don't jump to conclusions.

There are those who have assumed that the fruit that Eve ate was not an apple but actually the entering into a sexual union with the Serpent. Now, this is not true. Eve did not have sexual relations with Satan. However, it is true in a sense, in that Eve came under the covering of Satan. Now, think about this. What Eve did was to set aside her obedience to God, and instead she obeyed Satan. Eve rejected the authoritative word of God and chose to come under the authority of Satan by accepting Satan's word in place of God's word.

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What actually took place between Satan and Eve is this. In the beginning, Eve was created by God, and was instructed by God. Eve was to obey God's word. In this way she came under the covering of God, in that she came under him according to his authority over her, or behind God

in that she followed him. But when Eve rejected God's complete authority and accepted Satan's authority, when she believed the word of Satan instead of only believing God's word, she, in essence, committed spiritual adultery. She left God's covering in order to accept Satan's covering. In the physical sense between a husband and wife we would refer to this as adultery. But in the spiritual sense, the concept of Eve rejecting God's authority over her and choosing instead to accept Satan's authority over her is the same thing as adultery, but not in a physical sense. In the spiritual sense, Eve committed adultery against God. However, in the physical sense, what she did was to accept Satan as her authority, and to obey his word instead of God's word. In this way she followed after Satan instead of following after God. What this actually did was to momentarily put Satan in front of God. Satan became Eve's leader instead of God being the leader. Satan had temporarily set God aside and had taken God's place.

So, in summary, here's what we have. In the Garden of Eden, Eve was confronted by Satan. He tempted her by offering her an opportunity to believe something contrary to the word of God. Now, God had said they would surely die if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but Satan told Eve that this was not true. Eve had the choice of receiving this word of Satan as being true, or she could reject it. In the end, Eve accepted Satan's lie as truth. When she did that, she then came into the realization that because God could not be true and also tell a lie, therefore God was not necessarily good. He was good for her before that, but the very act of questioning God's word would also cause her to question the goodness of God. In short, she had discovered the concept of comparing goodness with that which is bad. If God's word wasn't all good after all, then maybe he was bad. These two concepts suddenly existed. She had come into the knowledge of good and evil just by accepting Satan's lie. Now there were two opposing forces, and it was impossible to assess them without comparing them. Therefore, one must be evil and the other one good.

Of course, this was the beginning of death. Death would automatically follow because Eve had rejected God's word, and therefore had rejected God. Now it was impossible that both God and Satan could be her covering, because she had determined that God and Satan could not both be good. Once upon a time God's word had been good, but now there was an alternative, and therefore a comparison would have to be made, deciding which one was good and which one was evil.