

## Q&A - ENDURING TEMPTATION WITH JESUS

1. From Genesis 3, "...knowing good and evil..." How would the word "evil" have any meaning for Adam and Eve? They did not know it, it seems as if it would not even be a concept they could wrap their minds around. Is this just the author adding context? Is this another way Satan tempted them, by using language they did not know? Did they somehow know what evil was?

Good question! It may feel unrelated at first, but this makes me think about how the biblical books were written and how they made it to us in their current format. We believe that all the 66 books of the Bible are in the form in which God intended to give them to us and that every word is true, written by human authors inspired by his Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). Genesis (and the whole Pentateuch—the first 5 books of the Bible) is thought to have been handed down via oral tradition until it was recorded in writing around the time of Moses (possibly by Moses himself).

What this tells us is that there are story-telling elements that are informed by people who have come after the story itself. In other words, Adam and Eve didn't write Genesis 2 and 3, so much of how that story is told is from the understanding and perspective of those who came after them. Many stories are not a play-by-play of every moment, but are often written in ways that are communicating a theological point.

And so, similar to your question about knowing what evil even is in order to be tempted by it, we could also ask things like *what language were they speaking? Where did that language come from? How did they know the meaning of those words?*

The point is that there are so many things that are missing from the story. What is most important is to discover what the author is most concerned with communicating about God and his creation. It seems to me that what was most tempting to Adam and Eve was that they could be 'like God,' though they already were (Genesis 1:26).

Another variable and perspective is that there are theologians who believe the Bible teaches that Adam and Eve were created in a universe and world that was already overrun with evil powers (see Michael Heiser, *The Unseen Realm* for a deep dive on this topic. This is also explained in [the series on spiritual beings by the Bible Project](#), especially [Where Did Evil Come From?](#)). They cite passages such as Genesis 1:28 where God blesses humanity and commands us to 'subdue' the earth—a very violent word in the Hebrew. From that perspective, Adam and Eve were already aware of evil, and were tempted by the possibility of having the right to 'know'—*choose?*—good from evil. This remains the sinful desire of fallen humans.

2. It's easy to think of Satan as "anti-God," meaning he is evil omniscient, evil omnipotent, and evil omnipresent. But this is not true. What then is

**tempting me? He cannot split himself and devote to each of us on earth. Is it a demon? Is it purely the sin nature within me? I have always felt as though when I sin and am tempted, that it was an evil force at work. So, I am just asking what that "force" could be.**

You are correct. Only God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. The “force” you describe could be any or all of the enemies of your soul—the world, the flesh, or the devil. In that triad, ‘the devil’ includes the specific being but since he does not work alone, also includes demons. If you are sensing a spiritual force outside of yourself, it could be a demon or some other fallen spiritual being.

While it can be helpful to know exactly what or who is affecting you, I would caution you against concerning yourself too much with them. As C.S. Lewis so famously said, *“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.”*

It’s not that it’s unimportant to know what spirit you are encountering—it is (1 John 4:1-6). It’s just that in the end, it’s more important to know the truth of God and how to spot our enemies’ lies than it is to know whether or not a demon is attacking you (John 8:31-47).

**3. Not really a question, but more of an encouragement to share - I really needed to learn that temptation itself does not equal sin because I would feel so guilty and condemned when I was even tempted. And when it was shown to me that Jesus, Himself, was tempted and it was not sin, it freed me from feeling as if I had already failed before I sinned.**

Yes, it is so important for us to remember that being tempted is not in itself sin and that even Jesus was tempted. Thanks for sharing!