

## Was Satan an Actual Snake In The Garden of Eden?

We read about the story of Eve and a snake talking in the Garden of Eden. (**Genesis 3**).

We know from experience that animals are incapable to verbalize or vocalize on the same level as humans.

Has you read the story, notice that Eve was not afraid of the serpent communicating with her. Is it possible that God communicated to Adam and Eve through animal? Not much details are given about it but leaves it to speculations and presumptions. The serpent/snake speaking to Adam and Eve is not the only instance in the Bible where an animal speaks. The prophet Balaam was rebuked by his donkey (**see Numbers 22:21-35**).

It was not the serpent speaking that should have alarmed them. It was the fact that the serpent was causing them to doubt God's instructions (**Genesis 3:1**), contradicting God (**Genesis 3:4**), and calling God's motives into question (**Genesis 3:5**). That should have been enough to cause both Eve and Adam to stop talking to the serpent.

A literal serpent is involved as a tool of Satan; otherwise, it would be unjust of God to curse it. This same Hebrew word (nachash) is used of literal snakes throughout Scripture (**Gen. 3:1-14; 49:17; Ex. 7:15; Num. 21:9; 2Ki. 18:4; Prov. 30:19; Eccl. 10:8,11; Amos 5:19; 9:3**). It wouldn't make sense to substitute Satan for serpent in these and other scriptures. Satan has no power to transform himself into a snake. He is an angel and always will be, though now fallen (**Ezek. 28:11-17**).

The character of the temptation illustrates craftiness. Satan and the serpent agreed on the best method to cause the fall of man. Nothing was said at first to awaken suspicion or shock the moral sense; merely a sly insinuation calculated to excite natural curiosity. Then there was a direct lie combined with just enough truth to give it plausibility (**Gen. 3:4-5**). Note the three steps leading to transgression in the outline of **Gen. 3:1-4** (**Gen. 3:6; Jn. 8:44; 2Cor. 11:3; 1Tim. 2:14**).

The facts of this account are neither allegory, myth, legend, nor fable, but literal and historical. They are rarely even expressed in figurative language. In fact, there are only three figurative statements in the third chapter of Genesis:

1. "Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" -- expressing utter humiliation of the serpent as the lowest of all the beasts of the field (note, **Gen. 3:14**)
2. "It shall bruise thy head" -- expressing complete and crushing defeat of the devil and all his forces, as a serpent is killed by crushing its head (note, **Gen. 3:14**)
3. "Thou shalt bruise his heel" -- expressing temporary sufferings of the Messiah (note, **Gen. 3:14**).

The "seed of the serpent" refers to natural serpents being natural enemies of man. The "seed of the woman" refers to the incarnation of God as a man (**Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1; Mt. 1; Jn. 1:14; Rom. 1:1-3; Gal. 4:4; 1Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14-18**).

There is no reason to make the historical record of man's fall figurative in any way. To make the serpent figurative of Satan rather than a tool of Satan is out of harmony with all facts in Scripture. The serpent is classed with the beasts of the field and cursed above them (**Gen. 3:1,14**). It is spoken of as being formed by God's hand (**Job 26:13**), as being cursed in the Millennium when Satan is bound (**Isa. 65:25**), and in the same literal sense as other creatures formed in Adam's day. True, Satan is symbolized by a great red dragon and is called "that old serpent" (**Isa. 27:1; Job 41:34; Rev. 12:3-17; 20:2**), and he is like the serpent of Eden who deceived Eve (**2Cor. 11:3; 1Tim. 2:14**); but this doesn't make the serpent of **Gen. 3** the personal devil any more than it does Peter in **Mt. 16:22-23**, or the kings of Babylon and Tyre in **Isa. 14:12-14 and Ezek. 28:11-17**. All were merely tools of Satan (see The Law of Double Reference). The most fundamental principle of interpretation is to take the Bible literally wherever possible. If the language can't be taken literally, then determine what is the literal truth conveyed by the figurative expressions.