

You shall not steal

No doubt we all have taken at some time or another something that did not belong to us. Whether it was another child's toy when we were young or repeating bad gossip, when older, about another and thus stealing their character—there are not many, if any, who live a full life and never fail to steal something. Of historical significance is the fact that a crafty serpent about 6,000 years ago convinced the first set of parents to steal fruit off a tree. The fruit did not belong to Mrs. Eve or Mr. Adam and it was not theirs to take. All kind of trees were plentiful and available, but this particular tree of the knowledge of good and evil was off limits to these two citizens of Eden. This fruit was “good for food, pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom” Gen 3, and so these two disobeyed their Creator and consumed what did not belong to them. A beautiful garden, planted and landscaped and designed by God himself, was no doubt a spectacle to behold! An abundance of food, beautiful food, was at their fingertips at any time but that did not satisfy the created beings. They had to have what they could not have and so God was disobeyed and the sin of theft was committed; and to this very day stealing and theft continue to plague every society on the globe. The brother of Jesus writes, “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it.” James 4.1-2.

More than a “bad apple” was stolen that day. The punishment levied by God was swift and severe. Adam and Eve were driven from their heaven on earth; toil and pain and subjection were now the normal course of the day and, oh yes, lest we forget, death would come upon them and the fruit of the tree of life would never be theirs to enjoy. Respect for another person's property is taken pretty seriously by God and he hasn't changed his mind since the stolen fruit day. Satan, the author of death, was the culprit. He stole what was to be eternal life and death came in its place. “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned---”, Rom 5.12-13.

After Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, Jesus was led by the Spirit into a vast and treacherous desert lying just up from the Jordan River and between Jericho and Jerusalem. Preparation was made by the Nazarene, for the greatest task of any human being ever born. For 40 days and nights, he fasted and prayed, and if that was not enough, Jesus was visited by Satan himself tempting him with the same temptation he used on Adam and Eve. “Here is bread, Jesus”, good food pleasing to the eye when one is hungry. “Here is power, Jesus”, power and glory of all nations can be yours. “Here is life, Jesus”, thru the protection of an angelic guard. The first Adam consented to the serpent and saw that the food was pleasing to the eye, that power could be had thru knowledge, and that life would certainly come and not death. The second Adam (Jesus) defied Satan (the serpent) and stood against the greatest attempted theft of human history. Satan stole eternal life from the human race in the garden of plenty. Satan attempted to steal eternal life from the human race once more in a desert of barrenness. Jesus stood the test and foiled the plot of the evil one. Jesus' mission is now established for a complete and perfect accomplishment: To restore that which he did not steal. “As in Adam, all men die, so in Christ all will be brought to life...” 1 Cor 15. 22. “Now let him who steals, steal no more....”