

WHY WASN'T EVE SURPRISED THAT THE SERPENT WAS TALKING TO HER?

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said to the woman, "Is it so that God has said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And 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 middle of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die." And the serpent said to the woman, "You shall not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil." And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make wise, she took of its fruit, and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.
(Genesis 3:1-6 ESV¹)

Most people are familiar with this story, whether they consider themselves Christians or not. Better writers than I have tackled this story of man's fall from grace and expulsion from Paradise in the Garden of Eden. Milton gives the best take on it, at least from a writing standpoint, but no one ever seems to ask the most obvious question of all concerning this passage of Scripture.

Follow me. You're walking along in a garden, just admiring the flowers and trees, and all the cute little animals; just minding your own business, when all of a sudden a snake **STARTS TALKING TO YOU!**

This is an event that you would not soon forget. It is something that would "stand out" in your otherwise ordinary day. Well, unless you are Eve. It doesn't even seem to register with her. She shows no surprise that the serpent is TALKING TO HER. Call me unimaginative, but this would shock me. I wouldn't know what to do. I certainly would not be in a state of mind conducive to carrying on a conversation with said serpent. But that is exactly what Eve does. She has a conversation with the talking snake as if it was something that she did all time. Doesn't that strike you as just a little bit odd? Don't you think that there is something missing

¹ English Standard Version

from these verses? The writer of Genesis just completely leaves out any reaction that Eve had or didn't have.

I have a theory. No real concrete evidence supports it. Just my own way of reading between the lines of this story and coming up with an answer as to why Eve was not the least bit surprised that the serpent was talking to her. But before we get to my theory, let's examine a couple of other possibilities and I will tell you why I don't think that they are valid.

POSSIBILITY #1 – *Eve had found the “special” mushrooms just before her encounter with the serpent.*

This would certainly explain why she wasn't surprised. If she had been sampling some of those plants, then it wouldn't be surprising to her if the tree itself was talking. For those of you who have never partaken of “special” mushrooms, then just understand that they have been known to alter your perception of reality, just a bit. Don't ask me how I know, just trust that I do.

Now, remember that this is just a possibility, and not what I think actually happened. In fact, I don't even know if there were “special” mushrooms in the Garden of Eden. I would be inclined to think that there weren't, but there is no verse that said there weren't; so it is a possibility. However; the “stoned” Eve theory would certainly explain her actions.

Not only did she talk to the serpent after it started talking to her, she took its advice! Now, if you can get past the idea of the talking serpent; you still have to deal with the fact that she valued its opinion over that of the Supreme Being that she KNEW had created the entire world, including her and Adam. It's not like she had never heard of God. It tells us in Genesis 3:8 that after both of them had eaten that they ***“heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day.”***

They knew what sound God made when He walked through the garden, so that means that they had to have heard it before. It doesn't say that they heard a sound and ***feared*** that it was God in the Garden. It very clearly says that they knew what they were hearing. This means that they had been in the presence of God before, and knew Him.

Now, anyone who has experienced mind-altering substances can attest to the fact that it leaves your decision making questionable at best. This is plain to see if you look at the clothes

and hairstyles from the sixties. If she were stoned, it would certainly explain her poor decision-making. But alas, I don't think this a realistic explanation. Even if there were "special" mushrooms in the Garden, God would have warned them about them. And also, she didn't give the "*But... I was stoned*" defense when God asked her what she had done.

POSSIBILITY #2 – *The serpent wasn't a real animal, it was the Devil being referred to as a snake to illustrate his low character, kind of like how we describe lawyers today.*

This possibility is one that I have heard before. Some people believe that it was not a physical creature that was talking to Eve; rather, it was the spiritual creature that we know as the Devil who was tempting her. It is certainly true that it was the Devil behind the temptation of Adam & Eve; and it is also true that the Devil is referred to as that "old Serpent" in Revelation 12:9. Some take those two things together to argue that it wasn't a physical serpent as we know them now to be.

If that is true, then it is not hard to see how Adam and Eve could be tricked into listening to his advice. He very easily could have appeared to be an angel of God who was talking to her. We know that he is capable of that by reading 2 Corinthians 11:14, which says, "***...for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.***" Under those conditions, there would be no cause for surprise when "the Serpent" started talking to Eve. If she was used to talking to God, there is no reason to believe that she would not be used to talking to angels as well.

On the surface, this theory seems very plausible. But there is one major problem with it. It ignores two separate verses from Genesis 3. In verse 1, it states, "***Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made.***" And again in verse 14, it says "***...Because you have done this (tempted Eve) you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every animal of the field. You shall go upon your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.***"

Some might try to make the argument that in neither of those two verses does it actually *say* that the serpent was an animal. It says that it was more cunning than any beast of the field, and then it says that it will be cursed more than any animal of the field. Technically, that is not explicit in revealing that the serpent itself was a beast of the field. Even the curse could be construed as metaphorical in its entirety. We know that snakes do not literally eat dust. "Eating

dust” is meant to show the snakes lowliness. That goes for it being told that it “*shall go upon your belly*” as well.

All that having been said, I still don’t really buy that argument.

I believe that it is definitively implied that the serpent was a beast of the field in the literal sense. For example; if I say to you that ‘so-and-so’ is hotter than any actress working in Hollywood, you would naturally assume that ‘so-and-so’ was an actress. You wouldn’t assume that ‘so-and-so’ was a teacher, or doctor, or any other possible thing, even though I didn’t say explicitly that ‘so-and-so’ was, in fact, an actress. The way that the verse reads clearly implies that the author is telling us that the serpent was a literal, physical snake.

What remains unclear is why the Devil chose the snake. It is difficult to separate thousands of years of anti-snake bias from the idea that, before its judgment, there would have been no negative stigma against the serpent. The Bible says that the serpent was “more cunning” than any of the other beasts that God had created. The Hebrew word that is in that verse is “*arum*”, which translates to cunning or subtle.

Maybe that is why the Devil chose the serpent to use as a vessel to tempt Eve. Maybe not. We don’t really have a way of knowing. What we do know is that the serpent has forever been associated with the Devil; and evil in general.

POSSIBILITY #3 (MY THEORY) – *Eve wasn’t surprised that the serpent was talking to her because animals could talk, or she could understand their language.*

Just hear me out.

When Adam and Eve were created (and yes, I do mean created; not evolved), they were perfect. They had no flaws whatsoever. God did not make any mistakes when He was designing them, He didn’t leave anything out. How do we know this? Genesis 1:31 says that “**God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.**” This simple fact allows for tremendous speculation as to what they were physically capable of while they were in the Garden.

But aside from the physical capabilities, we also can wonder at what their mental capabilities were. We know that after God created Eve, Adam waxes poetic and prophetic. Look at what happens in the Genesis story.

(Genesis 2:22-25 ESV) And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. (23) Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (25) And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

I point out that portion of Scripture in order to illustrate this point: Adam and Eve were not infantile adults after they were created. They were able to reason and speak. Adam even named all the animals. (Genesis 2:19) What I am trying to say is that their minds were fully developed from the start. I believe that Adam knew everything that he needed to know about the Earth in order to live safely and wonderfully in Paradise. It was only after the fall, when everything changed, that Adam would have had to strive to learn new information. The same is true for Eve.

Their fall from grace literally changed the world. The world began to die, even as they began to die. We don't know exactly what the world was like before the fall, but we can imagine. Imagine all the negative aspects of Planet Earth were stripped away; no storms, no earthquakes, no pollution, etc. That is the kind of environment that Adam and Eve lived in. Also, there was no fear of any kind. No fear of death, no fear of injury, and no fear of the animals.

If you can imagine a planet like that, then it would not be too much of a stretch to imagine that the relationship between Adam & Eve and the animals could have been completely different from what is possible now. Any pet owner will agree that there is some form of communication between them and their pet. I have a dog, and there is communication that occurs. We are not having conversations about art and literature, obviously, but that doesn't mean we don't communicate. He lets me know when he needs to go outside, and I let him know when I need to go outside. It's kind of a gentleman's agreement, so to speak.

According to the Bible, everything about the Garden of Eden was created by God, and God felt that it was very good. It was called Paradise for a reason. If we are willing to believe that it was better than it is now, why would we not assume that everything was better than it is now; including the communication between humans and animals.

If the rudimentary communication between humans and animals has deteriorated in the same manner that all of the rest of creation has deteriorated, then we can certainly speculate about what the previous state could have been. It is certainly possible that Adam and Eve could understand, in greater detail, the language of the animals. It is possible that the reason that Eve wasn't surprised by the talking serpent could be as simple as the fact that she was used to communicating with animals, and a talking serpent would not have seemed unusual to her.

Don't call me crazy just yet. We have talking animals in the modern world, namely: parrots. They don't communicate with sentences, or carry on conversations, but they are able to mimic the vocal sounds that they hear. We also know that certain marine animals use sophisticated forms of communication with each other. Whale songs have been recorded and even broadcast into outer space in the hopes of communicating with alien life forms.

If we allow that there are some animals who communicate with each other, then we can speculate how that communication might have taken form during the period of time between Creation and The Fall. We can certainly imagine that in a place called Paradise, that there would have existed things that no longer exist today. Namely: the ability to communicate with animals, or even animals that could talk.

I am not a lunatic; I know how some of this may sound. However, there is a biblical basis for my theory. Consider the story of Balaam.

(Numbers 22:22-33 ESV) *And God's anger was kindled because he went. And the Angel of Jehovah stood in the way as an enemy against him. And he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants with him. (23) And the ass saw the Angel of Jehovah standing in the way, and His sword drawn in His hand. And the ass turned aside out of the way and went into the field. And Balaam struck the ass, to turn her into the way. (24) But the Angel of Jehovah stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall on this side, and a wall on that side. (25) And when the ass saw the Angel of Jehovah, she pushed herself into the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. And he struck her again. (26) And the Angel of Jehovah went further and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. (27) And when the ass saw the Angel of Jehovah, she fell down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the ass with a staff. (28) And Jehovah opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have beaten me these three times?" (29) And Balaam said to the ass, "Because you have mocked me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you." (30) And the ass said to Balaam, "Am I not your ass, upon which you have ridden ever since I was yours, to this day? Was I ever known to do so to you?" And he said, "No." (31) Then Jehovah opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the Angel of Jehovah standing in the way, and His sword drawn in His hand. And he bowed down his head, and fell on his face. (32) And the Angel of Jehovah said to him, "Why have*

you beaten your ass these three times? Behold! I went out to be an enemy to you, because your way is perverse before Me. (33) and the ass saw Me and turned from Me these three times. Unless she had turned from me, surely now I also would have killed you and saved her alive.”

Here we have a second story in the Bible that centers on a talking animal. Take a closer look at verse 28. It says that “*Jehovah opened the mouth of the ass.*” It doesn’t say that Jehovah talked *through* the ass. It also doesn’t say that Jehovah inhabited the ass in order to speak to Balaam. It clearly states that God opened the mouth of the animal. The word in the Hebrew text that is translated as ‘opened’ in this verse is the word ‘*pathach*’. It means to loosen, or to set free.²

If the animal’s tongue was loosened in order for it to speak to Balaam, we could naturally assume that it was bound so that it couldn’t speak to Balaam prior to its loosening.

The animal goes on to have a lucid conversation with Balaam and even references past interactions and stresses its own loyalty to Balaam. This does not sound like remedial conversation to me. In fact, it doesn’t even sound like a dumb animal at all. It sounds like this animal has been keeping track of its own service, and while it does not seem to resent its service, it clearly regards its service as worthwhile and above reproach. The donkey seems genuinely offended that Balaam would assume anything other than noble intentions from it.

How could this be?

Let me restate my opinion. I believe that animals could talk before the Fall. I believe that the main reason that Eve wasn’t surprised that the serpent was talking to her was because she was used to conversing with animals while she was in Paradise. This story of Balaam and his donkey reiterates and supports my theory. It was clearly stated that God loosened the tongue of the animal. That says to me that the animal’s tongue had previously been bound.

The whole earth changed when Adam and Eve sinned and fell from grace. In Romans 8:22, it says that “*we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.*” That shows me that the whole earth bears the burden of sin with mankind. The fall of Adam and Eve even changed the animals. I believe that it caused a fundamental shift in how animals behave and how they interact with mankind.

Part of that shift would include that they no longer have the ability to communicate with us the way that they would have before. Man was designed to have dominion over the entire

² Strong’s H6605

earth. Genesis 1:26 tells us that ***“God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creepers creeping on the earth.”***

I believe that this dominion would have included the ability to effectively communicate with the animals. How could you have dominion over something that doesn't understand what your will is? How could you rule something that doesn't understand what it means to submit to your authority?

The donkey from the story of Balaam, once its tongue had been loosed by God, showed not only the ability to speak intelligently; it also showed that it understood what was required of it, and even seemed to take pride in a job well done. This does not seem to me to be the mindset of a dumb creature. I believe that the story of Balaam gives us a glimpse into what life might have been like in Paradise, in regards to how Adam and Eve were able to interact with the animals.

So, there you have it. I believe that Eve wasn't surprised when the serpent spoke to her because she was used to the animals speaking to her. And on top of that, I think maybe you should think a while before you ever use “jackass” as a derogatory term. Balaam's donkey would certainly not approve.

Wait, there's more!

The idea that animals could talk opens a whole world of possibility. What kind of conversations would animals have? Do you think that any of them were disappointed with the names that Adam gave them? What if they all got together to address concerns within the animal kingdom? A council of animals! They would call it the United Kingdoms instead of the United Nations!

Lucky for you, I have unearthed the only physical evidence that records a conversation between animals. It is the handwritten minutes from a council convened to bring a set of grievances against the cats that were living in the Garden of Eden.³ Experts have described the writing as “chicken-scratch”; however, we have no internal evidence within the pages that states conclusively that it was a chicken doing the recording. The following is a verbatim account of what went on that day in the Garden of Eden.

³ This is not a real find. It's for comedic purposes only. If you thought that I really found a written transcript of a set of grievances brought against the Eden cats, then put this book down and go back to school; and may God have mercy on you.

OWL: *Thanks everyone for making it here today, I know that all of you are very busy. We will get to the matter at hand directly; but first, we do have some “garden-keeping” issues that need to be addressed before we can move on. First of all, I would like to extend the council’s gratitude to both the plant kingdom and the kind squid for making the recording of this council possible. I am not alone in wonderment at the creation of this stuff that we’re calling, and I hope I am pronouncing it correctly, papyrus. What a marvelous invention! And to the squid...kudos on the ink, without it we would be forced to rely on an exclusively oral history of this moment.*

Our Lords and Masters have decided not to attend, as they felt that their presence here would impede the free flow of conversation; however, I will present the written transcript to them upon conclusion of our business here today. They did ask us to address one specific issue that pertains to them. It has to do with the Dogs. Our Lords and Masters have expressed their wishes that you, the Dogs, would please curtail your “sniffing” of their hind parts. They know that this a method that you use among yourselves, as to what purpose I cannot even imagine; however, they have stated that your noses are somewhat cold to the touch, and that it startles them when you approach and sniff them. I would recommend that this matter be taken very seriously by you, the Dogs, as they seem to have an affinity towards you that can best be described as friendly. You do not want to lose this.

When we convened this council, I asked for all of you to present any questions or concerns in advance, aside from the grievances against the Cats, and I am happy to see that many of you have done so. Participation will be a major key if we are going to live together harmoniously. We will address those now. When I call upon you, please be direct and get right to the point. No pontificating, if you please. We have much to attend to. I will now yield the floor to the representative of the Mules.

MULE: *Thank you kind Owl. I will be brief. We, the Mules, have been the victim of stereotyping of a most unkind nature. While we do take a certain pride in our steadfastness and truly there are those among us who are, how shall I say it, headstrong; we take offense at the phrase, “Stubborn as a mule”. This is unacceptable to us, and we would like to petition the council to have said phrase removed from daily usage. In its place, we would recommend “stubborn as a rock”, or something similar. Thank you.*

OWL: *It is duly noted. Let the record reflect that use of the phrase “stubborn as a mule” is no longer considered polite, and should be banished from conversation immediately. I will go further still and add to that list any derogatory or inflammatory usage of the word “ass” or “jackass”. Come, come fellow animals, we must not resort to name-calling. The council will now recognize the representative of the Goats.*

GOAT: *Thank you, wise Owl. Ours is a somewhat complicated grievance. To put it as succinctly as possible, we feel that the Sheep are consistently cast in a more positive manner as opposed to us. It is a subtle distinction, but it is one that does not go unnoticed among us. We often hear whispers among other animals that there should be, and I gasp as I say this, segregation of our two species. We have heard rumors that the Sheep and the Goats should be separate. I fear this concept of separation. I will allow that the Sheep are more physically*

attractive than us. I will note the exception of my mate, who far outshines any sheep that I have encountered. My greatest fear in this matter is that the subtle bias evident among us animals will find its way to our Lords and Masters and will in some way affect their opinion of us. Thank you.

OWL: *Your concerns are well received, noble Goat, and this council will do everything within its power to ensure that your greatest fears do not come to pass. I will personally address the situation with our Lords and Masters and will do all that I can to convey your concerns about the disparity in perception in regards to your kind and the Sheep. If I were you, I would not let it trouble you any longer; as I am sure that your fears will never come to fruition. I can see no possible situation arising that would impose negative connotations upon you or your species in the future. Moving on, the council will now recognize the representative of the Bees.*

BEE: *Thank you wizzz Owl. My kind and I would like to make a zuzgezztion in regardzz to our honey. Juzzz azzk! Thizz izz primarily directed to the Bearzz, but zztandzz true for all zspeciezz. We know that it tazztezz good, that izz why we make it! That doezz not give you the right to take it whenever you pleazze. Thizz izz unacceptable. Do you zzee thezze thingzz at the end of our bodiezz? Don't make uzz uzzz them! That izz all.*

OWL: *Okay, did everyone get that? Courtesy, fellow animals, we must always use courtesy. Don't take what doesn't belong to you. These are basic principles we are talking about here. The Bees perform a valuable function here in the Garden, and we mustn't upset them. Next up, the council recognizes the representative of the Pigs.*

PIG: *Thank you Owl. I hope that this doesn't sound hubristic, but we Pigs would like to petition our Lords and Masters for a name change. We don't like the name Pig. It just sounds so guttural and dirty. We didn't say anything at the time of our christening because we, like the rest of you, were in such a state of awe at our own creation, and at the subsequent creation of our Lords and Masters that we didn't wish to be viewed as malcontents. We wanted to make a good first impression. But as the days stretch on, we are becoming more and more dissatisfied with our lowly moniker.*

OWL: *I will surely take your petition to our Lords and Masters at the conclusion of our business. I cannot say with any certainty as to how it will be received. Are there any others who share this objection to what you have been named? By show of paw, hoof, or claw, are there others who would like to have their name officially changed from its current state?*

Let the record reflect that, in addition to the Pigs, those requesting name changes are as follows: the Slug, the Sloth, the Dodo Bird, the Dung Beetle, the Warthog, and the Pig-Nosed Turtle. Very good. I do not give any guarantees, but I will present the petition to our Lords and Masters. One more item is on the agenda before we get to the grievances against the Cats. The council recognizes the representative from the Duck-Billed Platypus species.

DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS: *I and my fellow DBP's are still awaiting clarification on our classification status within the animal kingdom. We feel that we have been more than patient up to this point, but our tolerance is wearing very thin. Are we mammals or not?! The confusion is*

intolerable. And we would also like to bring to the council's attention that we are not in the least bit amused by the current "joke" making the rounds that we are somehow a collection of left-over parts. This is insulting and demeaning, and we demand that it cease immediately. We will revolt if this cruelty continues unabated!

OWL: *Okay, okay, relax friend. Would everyone please stop insulting the platypi. Is that right? Platypi? Platypuses? Regardless, the council agrees that any disrespect towards another species is unacceptable. It doesn't matter what predicates it. We must live together in harmony, I cannot overemphasize that. As to the question of classification, I honestly do not have an answer for you. I will bring it up with our Lords and Masters, but the last time it was discussed, they had not formed an opinion yet.*

Now, we must move on to our main order of business. There have been multiple species who have filed grievances against the Cats here in the Garden. The Cats will, of course, be given a chance to address these grievances, but let us first hear what they are. The overwhelming majority of complaints center on the same thing. There is a feeling among many species that the Cats are arrogant to the point of rudeness. There is a general sense among the species that Cats feel that they are better than everyone else.

Also, the Mice have specifically complained that the Cats view them as toys to be played with and the Mice are not happy with that situation at all. The Dogs have complained that the Cats antagonize them and then try to gain sympathy from our Lords and Masters when they, the Dogs, react to the provocation. Many species have complained about the noisy nighttime mating. And, there is a nearly unanimous aversion to the spitting up of hairballs. I will now yield the floor to the representative of the Cats to address these grievances as they see fit.

CAT: *I believe that I speak for all within my species when I say that I am not the least bit surprised that we have been singled out for scorn amongst all of you, our inferiors. Luckily for us, our Lords and Masters seem to be content with us just the way we are. Perhaps it is their higher intellect that recognizes the same trait within us. What do you wish us to do? Should we be like the idiotic Dogs that run chasing any thing that is thrown? Should we be like the imbecilic mice and sing stupid little songs about the size of the world?*

We, as a species, refuse to apologize for our superiority!

If you have complaints about our mating, it is only because you are jealous that we do it with so much more vigor and enthusiasm than you do. If you dislike seeing us cough up hairballs, it is only because you are jealous of our perfect physical appearance and will look to anything in an attempt to bring us down to your unkempt level. From the Pig that wallows in its own filth to even the "wise" Owl that leaves its droppings to land wherever they will; you are all vile creatures that are beneath us and unworthy to even be in our presence. Good day, sirs!

OWL: *Well, that was certainly less than cordial! Please, fellow residents of Eden, withhold your anger against the Cats. Let them be. If they think they are better than us, so be it. We can live in peace anyway. I think it best if we conclude these proceedings before things get out of*

hand. As stated before, I will take the transcript of this council to our Lords and Masters, and will inform them of all that transpired.

On a separate note, can someone please tell me where the Serpent has wandered off to? I had hoped for his input and now I see that he has gone missing. I certainly hope that everything is well with him.