



2022 Q4 Future Hope: Lesson 1 Rebellion In A Perfect Universe

by Russell Atkins

LESSON INTRODUCTION

“God created human beings to enjoy eternity in a loving relationship with Him and His creation. But this relationship was distorted by the mysterious appearance of sin within the heavenly courts (Isa. 14:12–15, Ezek. 28:12–19, Rev. 12:7–12) and the subsequent fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1–19, Rom. 5:12).”

“As mortal human beings, we need assurance in the present and hope for the future. As well stated by the Swiss theologian Emil Brunner, “What oxygen is for the lungs, such is hope for the meaning of human life. Take oxygen away and death occurs through suffocation, take hope away and humanity is constricted through lack of breath; despair supervenes, spelling the paralysis of intellectual and spiritual powers by a feeling of the senselessness and purposelessness of existence. As the fate of the human organism is dependent on the supply of oxygen, so the fate of humanity is dependent on its supply of hope.”—Eternal Hope (London: Lutterworth Press, 1954), p. 7. Indeed, the biblical hope sustains us during the existential crises we face in our journey toward eternity.”

This is well said. The lesson takes great pains to trace “death” back to its origins [Satan’s rebellion in Heaven]. This “great controversy” perspective has been unique to Adventism and thankfully other Protestant denominations are clueing in to its value.

SABBATH

How you have fallen from heaven, you star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who defeated the nations! (Isa. 14:12, NASB).

From the lesson: “Many thinkers have tried to explain the origin of evil. Some suggest that evil always has existed because, in their view, good can be appreciated only in contrast to evil. Others believe that the world was created perfect but, somehow, evil emerged. For example, in Greek mythology, evil started when the curious Pandora opened a sealed box out of which flew all the evils of the world (this myth, however, does not explain the origin of the evils supposedly hidden in that box).

By contrast, the Bible teaches that our loving God is all-powerful (1 Chron. 29:10, 11) and perfect (Matt. 5:48). All that He does must likewise be perfect (Deut. 32:4), which includes how He created our world. How, then, could evil and sin appear in a perfect world? According to Genesis 3, the fall of Adam and Eve brought sin, evil, and death here.



But that answer raises another issue. Even before the Fall, evil already had existed, manifested by the “serpent,” who deceived Eve (Gen. 3:1–5). Hence, we need to go back, even before the Fall, in order to find the source and origins of the evil that so dominates our present existence and that at times can make it pretty miserable.”

Again, well said.

What is “Death”? How does Scripture define it? How many types of “death” are spoken of in the Bible? Why didn’t Lucifer die as soon as he rebelled? Or when he was cast out of Heaven?

What Law lens do you view these questions with?

SUNDAY

Creation, and Expression of Love.

We can easily see two antagonist principles / governments at war here on Earth — in humanity, indeed, all of nature. Scripture provides us some clarity

“Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?” And the owner replied, “An enemy has done this” (Matt. 13:27, 28, NKJV).

See also: <https://biblehub.com/romans/8-22.htm>

Before Mankind fell, God warned the First Couple about consuming the forbidden fruit. “. . . you shall surely die” Genesis 2:17 This gets literally translated from Hebrew as “. . . dying you shall die.”

This is quoted from Ministry Magazine:

Consider a classic example in the final phrase in Genesis 2:17: “ ‘But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’ ” (emphasis added).¹ The Hebrew text uses an idiomatic construction literally translated “dying you shall die.” Members and students figure out such literal translations, and come running to the pastor with questions. Some have asked me if this phrase indicates that Adam and Eve began dying that very day, even though they did not finish dying the same day. Others wonder if this might be a descriptive warning akin to a parent telling a child, “If you touch the fire, you will get burned.” **Still others suspect it should be understood as a divine announcement disclosing an enforceable penalty.** Emphasis mine.

I encourage you to read the entire article and consider which Law lens is viewed by the author.

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2011/12/dying-you-shall-die>



Clearly Eve and Adam didn't die the instant they tasted the fruit. WHY? What prevented their instant death? Did God intervene in some fashion to prevent their instant consumption?

- He intervened to veil His own glory, so our first parents would continue living on Earth with the hope of restoration.
- He intervened in now corrupted human nature [putting enmity between humans and Satan — Gen. 3: 15]
- He intervened in Nature itself by putting a “fear” of man into the creatures of the Earth after the flood. — Gen. 9: 2
- He intervened by restraining the powers of darkness [4 winds of destruction in Revelation].
- He intervened by gifting humanity the first death of sleep. How is this a gift??

Question from the lesson: “What can the certainty that ‘God is Love’ tell us about the nature of His creative activities?”

What indeed?

The lesson goes on to list three implications of Love / Creation

1. Love cannot exist in / of itself — it must be expressed.
2. All that God does is an expression of His infinite love [Creation, redemption and “punitive judgements”].

The lesson quoted DA p. 762 for support.

“God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love.” **Time to check your Law lens.**

3. Since God is Love, He cannot be the source of sin/evil.

Is Love the **only** reason God created? Specifically our creation?? Was there something else at play?

MONDAY

Free Will, the Basis of Love.

I think the Law of Liberty is the most misunderstood of the Design Laws. Why does God give pedophiles freedom to molest children?? Why does He give a high schooler the freedom to shoot his classmates? Why did He, knowing the end from the beginning, create Lucifer in the first place?

Why is “free will” important? ^^ Love cannot exist without it.^^

I loathe the terms “hate speech” and “hate crime”. There’s only FREE SPEECH. Free speech you like and free speech you don’t. And there’s only crime. Period.



Given our current cultural mess, I have some good friends that have said “We just need the ‘right kind’ of dictator to . . .” Would a dictator actually help? Or has our culture already become dictatorial? Do we need more freedom / free will or less?

Which Law lens are we using??

From the lesson:

The origin and nature of sin are mysteries that no one can fully explain. Even so, God did not ordain sin to exist; He only allowed its existence, and then, at the cross, He took upon Himself the ultimate punishment for that sin, thus enabling Him, ultimately, to eradicate it. In all our painful musings about evil, we must never forget that God Himself paid the highest price for the existence of sin and of evil (see Matt. 5:43–48 and Rom. 5:6– 11), and that He has suffered from them more than any of us ever will.

How would you explain the above paragraph??

TUESDAY

Mysterious Ingratitude.

The lesson references Ezekiel 28:12–19 for this lesson. Pay special attention to verse 18 and think about the final Judgement.

From the lesson:

“In reality, Lucifer was created perfect—which included his ability to choose freely. However, abusing that perfection by the misuse of his free will, he became corrupted by considering himself more important than he actually was.”

Was Lucifer created perfect? The above passage seems to indicate he was.

Or was he created sinless, like Adam and Eve, who had to develop perfection?

“Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. . . . Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. . . . Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world.

Sin appeared in a perfect universe. . . . The reason of its inception or development was never explained and never can be, even at the last great day when the judgment shall sit and the



books be opened. . . . At that day it will be evident to all that there is not, and never was, any cause for sin. At the final condemnation of Satan and his angels and of all men who have finally identified themselves with him as transgressors of God's law, every mouth will be stopped. When the hosts of rebellion, from the first great rebel to the last transgressor, are asked why they have broken the law of God, they will be speechless. There will be no answer to give."—*That I May Know Him*, p. 15.

WEDNESDAY

The Price of Pride.

Tuesday's lesson suggested that ingratitude played a role in Lucifer's fall. It may have a point, however, I think Pride, today's subject, was the primary force. In my experience, pride leads to ingratitude.

From the lesson:

"In the Bible, the city of Babylon stands for a power in direct opposition to God and His kingdom; and the king of Babylon (with special allusion to Nebuchadnezzar) becomes a symbol of pride and arrogance. God had revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar that Babylon was only the gold head of the great image of successive empires (Dan. 2:37, 38). Challenging God's revelation, the king made an image entirely of gold—a symbol that his kingdom would last forever—and even required everyone to worship it (Daniel 3). As in the case of the king of Tyre (Ezek. 28:12–19), the king of Babylon also became a symbol of Lucifer.

Isaiah 14:3–11 describes the fall of the haughty and oppressive king of Babylon. Then, Isaiah 14:12–15 moves from the historical realm to the heavenly courts and highlights that a similar proud and arrogant spirit generated the original fall of Lucifer. The text explains that Lucifer planned to exalt his throne above all heavenly hosts and make himself " "like the Most High" ' " (Isa. 14:14). This was the beginning of a new and hostile situation in which God's altruistic love and cooperation would be challenged by Lucifer's selfishness and competition. The enemy was not afraid of accusing God of what he himself was and of spreading his lies to other angels. Here are the mysterious origins of evil in the universe."

Is Babylon the ONLY power standing in direct opposition to God and His kingdom?? [see Ex. 5: 2, and Daniel 11 with <https://comeandreason.com/daniel-11-end-time-events/>]

Consider the following:

[The] work of opposition to the law of God had its beginning in the courts of heaven, with Lucifer, the covering cherub. Satan determined to be first in the councils of heaven, and equal with God. *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 222.

The evil that led to Peter's fall and that shut out the Pharisee from communion with God is roving



the ruin of thousands today. *There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable.*

Peter's fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. Self-confidence led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 154, 155. Emphasis mine.

THURSDAY

Lesson — The Spread of Unbelief.

Was Lucifer's issue "unbelief" or did he sincerely believe he was equal with Michael? The quote from yesterday tells us he opposed God's Law and presented it as imposed to the angelic host.

Adam and Eve's issue was believing sincerely a lie, and not trusting God.

From the lesson:

"Reflecting on the beginning of this controversy, Ellen G. White explains that "God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he retained in heaven. Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 495, 496.

We do not know how long that war lasted in the heavenly realms. Regardless of its intensity and time span, the most important aspect of the whole struggle was that Satan and his angels "were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven" (Rev. 12:8, NRSV; see also Luke 10:18). The problem, of course, was that they came here, to the earth."

After Satan and those who fell with him were shut out of heaven, and he realized that he had forever lost all its purity and glory, he repented, and wished to be reinstated in heaven. He was willing to take his proper place, or any position that might be assigned him. But no; heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. All heaven might be marred should he be taken back; for sin originated with him, and the seeds of rebellion were within him. Both he and his followers wept, and implored to be taken back into the favor of God. But their sin—their hatred, their envy and jealousy—had been so great that God could not blot it out. It must remain to receive its final punishment. [Ed. Why??]

When Satan became fully conscious that there was no possibility of his being brought again into favor with God, his malice and hatred began to be manifest. He consulted with his angels, and a plan was laid to still work against God's government. When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden, Satan was laying plans to destroy them. . . . It was decided that [he] should assume another form and manifest an interest for man. He must insinuate against God's



truthfulness and create doubt whether God did mean just what He said; next, he must excite their curiosity, and lead them to pry into the unsearchable plans of God—the very sin of which Satan had been guilty.—*Early Writings*, p. 146.

Friday

Further Thought: Read Ellen G. White, “**Why Was Sin Permitted?**” pp. 33–43, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*; “**The Origin of Evil,**” pp. 492–504, in *The Great Controversy*. [Emphasis mine.]

There was no possible hope for the redemption of those [Satan and his angels] who had witnessed and enjoyed the inexpressible glory of heaven, and had seen the terrible majesty of God, and, in presence of all this glory, had rebelled against Him. There were no new and wonderful exhibitions of God’s exalted power that could impress them so deeply as those they had already experienced. If they could rebel in the very presence of glory inexpressible, they could not be placed in a more favorable condition to be proved. There was no reserve force of power, nor were there any greater heights and depths of infinite glory to overpower their jealous doubts and rebellious murmuring. Their guilt and their punishment must be in proportion to their exalted privileges in the heavenly courts.—Ellen G. White, *Confrontation*, p. 21.

From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, ‘that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.