



2022 Q4 Future Hope: Lesson 3 Understanding Human Nature

by Russell Atkins

SABBATH

Memory text: “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).

When the serpent told Eve she “certainly will not die”, he was repeating a theme he had already started with Eve [and in Heaven as well]. The theme was God was withholding something desirable from her — **“Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”** Genesis 3:1.

Implied in this question is God is stingy/selfish.

What kind of God would not let His created beings eat the fruit of the trees?
How can a God like this claim to love you?
God doesn't really have the best interest in His heart for his creation.

My suspicion is Lucifer had been observing Adam and Eve since their creation and he had noticed some subtle body language cues and facial expressions between them. I suspect he noted some differences in knowledge and understanding between the two and thought if he appealed to Eve's desire for increased knowledge, he would have his best chance.

What do you think he would have tempted Adam with if it had been Adam alone at the tree?? Or does it even matter?

Ever since the Fall, he has been tempting women with the idea that someone or something [i.e. The nebulous Patriarchy] is trying to withhold freedom or knowledge from them. And he has been tempting men with women.

This is fallen human nature.

It's difficult to imagine anything other than our fallen nature isn't it?

If men had been willing to receive the truth so plainly stated in the Scriptures concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, they would see in the claims and manifestations of spiritualism the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders. But rather than yield the liberty so agreeable to the carnal heart, and renounce the sins which they love, multitudes close their eyes to the light and walk straight on, regardless of warnings, while Satan weaves his snares about them, and they become his prey. “Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,” therefore “God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11. **[ED: What Law is described here?]**



Those who oppose the teachings of spiritualism are assailing, not men alone, but Satan and his angels. They have entered upon a contest against principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high places. Satan will not yield one inch of ground except as he is driven back by the power of heavenly messengers. The people of God should be able to meet him, as did our Saviour, with the words: "It is written." Satan can quote Scripture now as in the days of Christ, and he will pervert its teachings to sustain his delusions. Those who would stand in this time of peril must understand for themselves the testimony of the Scriptures.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 559.

SUNDAY

A Living Being.

From the lesson: "Although both animals and man alike were made from "the ground," (Gen. 2:19, NIV) the formation of the man was distinct from that of animals in two main ways. First, God shaped the man physically, and then "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7, NIV). He was a physical entity before he became a living one. Second, God created humanity as both male and female in the very image and likeness of the Godhead (Gen. 1:26, 27)."

Scripture doesn't explicitly say that the animals were spoken in to existence or whether or not God formed them with his hands, but it is explicit in saying that Adam was formed by the hands of God [Christ] and the breath of life was breathed in to him.

Note that Adam was formed from Earth and Eve was formed from Adam. There's some great symbology here.

Consider what Man relates to the best. The world [Earth] that he functions in. He observes it, tests it, explores it. He describes and codifies all of the natural laws he can and shares this with his fellow men.

Consider what Woman relates to the best. Man [i.e. human relations]. She observes, and tests, and explores them. She then, gossips with all of her friends about them.

"Men test ideas. Women test men." Jordan Peterson.

Physical life is something which each individual received. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Lifegiver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. "I lay it down of myself," He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3. This is the open fountain of life for the world.— Ellen G.



White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1130.

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 415.

MONDAY

The Soul Who Sins Shall Die

Read Ezekiel 18:4, 20 and Matthew 10:28. How can these verses help us understand the nature of the human soul?

The lesson states “Nothing infected by sin can be eternal by nature.” I would go farther and say that nothing **created** can be eternal by nature. Created beings can be future eternal, but not past eternal. Only God is Eternal [past / present / future].

It also states “Death is the natural consequence of sin, which affects all life here.” Well said. Death is not an imposed punishment from God for sin. It’s a predictable, unavoidable outcome of sin [aka Lawlessness].

How does Ezekiel 18:4, 20: “ ‘The soul who sins shall die’ ” (NKJV) help us in our understanding??

What about the 2nd Commandment:

“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Is this a contradiction??

From the bottom section in Monday’s lesson:

Why is the surety of the Second Coming, which is made certain by Christ’s first coming (and



after all, what good was Christ's first coming without the second?), so crucial to all that we believe? What hope would we have without the promise of His return?

Is Christ's 2nd coming necessary?? What about the 3rd coming?? Could God and His Law be vindicated with just Christ's death/resurrection?

When the voice of God awakes the dead, he will come from the grave with the same appetites and passions, the same likes and dislikes, that he cherished when living. God works no miracle to re-create a man who would not be re-created when he was granted every opportunity and provided with every facility. During his lifetime he took no delight in God, nor found pleasure in His service. His character is not in harmony with God, and he could not be happy in the heavenly family.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 270.

Satan told his angels to make a special effort to spread the lie first repeated to Eve in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die." And as the error was received by the people, and they were led to believe that man was immortal, Satan led them on to believe that the sinner would live in eternal misery. Then the way was prepared for Satan to work through his representatives and hold up God before the people as a revengeful tyrant—one who plunges all those into hell who do not please Him, and causes them ever to feel His wrath; and while they suffer unutterable anguish, and writhe in the eternal flames, He is represented as looking down upon them with satisfaction. Satan knew that if this error should be received, God would be hated by many, instead of being loved and adored; and that many would be led to believe that the threatenings of God's Word would not be literally fulfilled, for it would be against His character of benevolence and love to plunge into eternal torments the beings whom He had created.—*Early Writings*, p. 218.

TUESDAY

The Spirit Returns to God.

It's time for a review.

Humans are tri-partate. We have a body [Gr. Soma]. We have a unique identity [Gr. Psyche]. And we have an energy source [Gr. Pneuma — aka "Breath of Life"]

This is analogous to a computer having hardware, software, and an energy source [AC / DC / Battery].

The lesson uses terms "soul" and "spirit". Where do these fit in to our computer analogy? Is't the "Soul" the same as the Psyche / Unique identity, and the "Spirit" the same as the Pneuma / Energy source??

"If death be the last enemy to be destroyed at the resurrection, we may learn how earnestly believers should long and pray for the second coming of Christ, when this full and final



conquest shall be made. . . . This is the day that all believers should long, and hope, and wait for, as being the accomplishment of all the work of their redemption, and all the desires and endeavors of their souls.” “Hasten, O Lord, this blessed day!”. . . Such was the hope of the apostolic church, of the “church in the wilderness,” and of the Reformers.—*Maranatha*, p. 14.

WEDNESDAY

The Dead Know Nothing.

The lesson recommends reading **Job 3:11–13; Psalm 115:17; Psalm 146:4; and Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10** for insights on the state of the dead.

Are there any other, perhaps better texts available to us??

See Daniel 12: 2. Multitudes who **sleep** in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

- John 11: 12,13. His disciples replied, “Lord, if he **sleeps**, he will get better. Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural **sleep**.”
- 1 Cor. 15: 50-52. I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all **sleep**, but we will all be changed— **5** in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
- Eph. 5: 14. This is why it is said: “Wake up, **sleep**er, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”
- 1 Thess. 4:13-15. Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who **sleep** in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that ***God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*** According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. [ED: Emphasis mine].

The following is an interesting perspective from EGW:

“But, mother,” said I, “do you really believe that the soul sleeps in the grave until the resurrection? Do you think that the Christian, when he dies, does not go immediately to heaven, nor the sinner to hell?”



She answered: “The Bible gives us no proof that there is an eternally burning hell. If there is such a place, it should be mentioned in the Sacred Book.” . . .

It was some months after this conversation before I heard anything further concerning this doctrine; but during this time my mind had been much exercised upon the subject. When I heard it preached, I believed it to be the truth. From the time that light in regard to the sleep of the dead dawned upon my mind, the mystery that had enshrouded the resurrection vanished, and the great event itself assumed a new and sublime importance. . . . If at death the soul entered upon eternal happiness or misery, where was the need of a resurrection of the poor moldering body?

But this new and beautiful faith taught me the reason why inspired writers had dwelt so much upon the resurrection of the body; it was because the entire being was slumbering in the grave. I could now clearly perceive the fallacy of our former position on this question.—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pp. 49, 50.

THURSDAY

Resting With the Forefathers.

From the lesson:

“We can identify at least three meaningful aspects of resting with the forebearers. One is the idea that sooner or later the time will come when we need to rest from our own tiring labors and sufferings. Another idea is that we are not the first and only ones to follow that undesirable trail, because our forebearers already have gone ahead of us. A third idea is that, by being buried close to them, we are not alone but remain together even during the unconsciousness of death. This might not make much sense to some modern individualist cultures, but it was very meaningful in ancient times.”

Can anyone think of any advantages / disadvantages of being buried next to our kin??