

# ***Rebellion and Redemption***

## ***Crisis in Eden***

Lesson #2 for January 9, 2016

Scriptures: Genesis 1:28; 2:15-17; 3:1-7,10-19; Romans 8:17; Matthew 6:26.

1. This lesson will be a discussion of what happened in the Garden of Eden. What did God create? What happened to God's beautiful garden?
2. Genesis 1:31 tells us that after God had created our world, He declared that it was very good. It is clear today that things are not "very good." How did this earth get from that perfect beginning to where we are now? What is the explanation for the chaos, insecurity, violence, war, pollution, oppression, and exploitation that we see in our world today? The story in Genesis 1&2 is the beginning of our world's history. We will look at how Satan was involved. What was the role of the serpent/snake? What does that mean for our understanding of the great controversy.
3. For Bible-believing Christians, Genesis 1 tells of the seven 24-hour, "evening and morning," days in which God created our world. After each of those days, God pronounced His work "good." While it is possible, as many believe, that our earth was here long before creation week—looking something like our moon does now or, perhaps, Mars—it was the creation week that produced the beautiful world we call the Garden of Eden.
4. After creating the Garden of Eden step-by-step, God announced blessings for humans in three specific areas. When Adam and Eve were created, God blessed them also with a similar encouragement to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. (Genesis 1:28) Genesis 1:22 tells us that God had blessed the sea creatures and the birds in a similar way, telling them to be fruitful and multiply.
5. But, human beings were given an additional blessing and responsibility. They were given "dominion" over all other living things. That was supposed to be a caring, protective relationship.
6. Finally, in Genesis 2:3, human beings were given the blessing of the seventh-day Sabbath. Human beings were made to be distinct and separate from animals. They were given the power of speech and the power of free choice. No other creature on earth has these abilities. Thus, human beings were made "in the image of God" and given those special abilities and are clearly not products of any alternative view of origins such as evolution.
7. It is interesting to note that in the process of creation, God produced clearly-defined boundaries: Light versus darkness, waters above and waters below, land and sea, night and day, men and women. He also produced two very important trees placed in the midst of the garden with very opposite effects on human beings. On one side was the tree of life; on the other side, was the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
8. Read Genesis 1:4,6-7,14,18,21,24-25. God wants us to understand certain clearly defined boundaries. He wants us to understand what our relationships to others in our universe should be. God gave very specific instructions to Adam and Eve. They were to eat daily of the tree of life. But, they were never to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:15-17) Serious consequences would result if they did. They were not even to go near that tree. Adam and Eve understood that they were free to eat of all the trees in the garden except that one. What was so unusual about that one tree? Was its fruit

poisonous? Why were they not even to go near it?

**The tree of knowledge had been made a test of their obedience and their love to God. The Lord had seen fit to lay upon them but one prohibition as to the use of all that was in the garden; but if they should disregard His will in this particular, they would incur the guilt of transgression. Satan was not to follow them with continual temptations; he could have access to them only at the forbidden tree.** Should they attempt to investigate its nature, they would be exposed to his wiles. They were admonished to give careful heed to the warning which God had sent them and to be content with the instruction which He had seen fit to impart.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 53.3. [Bold type is added.]

9. Did God tell them just enough about that tree to make them curious? Ellen White suggested that not only God but also the angels warned them about that tree.

**Holy angels**...gave instruction to Adam and Eve concerning their employment, and also **taught them concerning the rebellion of Satan and his fall.**—1SG 20; TA 49.3.

He [Adam] stood before God in the strength of perfect manhood, all the organs and faculties of his being fully developed and harmoniously balanced; and he was surrounded with things of beauty, and **conversed daily with the holy angels.**—2SP 88; TA 49.4. [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

10. Are there things about which God tells us we must not become involved in our day? What about sin, disobedience, stealing, gambling, adultery, jealousy, envy, covetousness, some forms of worldly entertainment, etc. Think how much better our lives can be and will be if we avoid those things.
11. Read Genesis 3:1-7. What do we know about that snake? He was referred to in some cases as a serpent. Is a serpent different from a snake? When the children of Israel were traveling through the desert, they complained about the food. When they did complain, God, in effect, said: "You do not understand all the protections that I have been giving you every day. Let Me remove some of My protections, and you will see what I have been doing." (See Numbers 21:5-9; Deuteronomy 8:15.) As we know from that story, a bronze serpent was made and set on a pole so that all who trusted in God's healing powers could look upon it and live. Unfortunately, their very concrete ways of thinking led them to preserve that bronze serpent for 700 years and actually place it in the courtyard of the temple as an object of worship. King Hezekiah finally destroyed it as recorded in 2 Kings 18:4. We are also reminded of the story of the serpent in Revelation 12:7-12. In that passage he was called the "ancient serpent." Isn't it clear that John was referring to the story of the Garden of Eden?
12. Read Genesis 3:1 again. Unfortunately, very few of us who read this passage are able to understand the original Hebrew. The original Hebrew implies that Satan's question should read something like this: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from **any** tree in the garden'?"
13. Let us be clear that the serpent or snake in the tree was no ordinary animal. Reviewing

what we know from Revelation 12:9, he is called that “ancient serpent,” the Devil, Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. So, who is the Devil or Satan? The word *Devil* comes from the Greek word *diabolos*, and the word *Satan* comes from the Hebrew *shatan*. The word *diabolos* might even suggest a kind of mudslinger—someone who wants to smear someone else’s person or reputation.

14. When the serpent asked Eve that question, what was he implying? Consider some of the other questions that were only implied:
  1. Did God *really* say that? The way the question was asked, it could not have been answered by a quick, “No.” There were obviously other issues behind the question.
  2. Why would someone try to imply that God had said something that God clearly had not said? What was the purpose of the question?
  3. The question is stated in such a way as to suggest that God had forbidden Adam and Eve from eating of *any* tree in the garden! What we see is that the serpent was not making a simple inquiry of Eve. He was implying a lot of terrible things about God.
15. Read Genesis 2:16-17. What had God actually said? We do not know how many different trees there were in the Garden of Eden. But, we do know that there was only one tree from which they were forbidden to eat—not as an arbitrary rule but rather, for their own protection. So, what we see is that the serpent—and we know that the real person speaking was the Devil himself—was trying to imply that God is very stingy with His blessings. Would God ever make a beautiful garden with beautiful fruit hanging everywhere and then tell the occupants of the garden not to eat any of it?
16. In actual fact, God was a very generous God, giving them permission to eat from all but one tree in the garden. Moreover, placing that one tree in the garden gave Adam and Eve a clear choice: 1) Follow God’s directions at all times, or 2) Venture onto dangerous ground by eating of the fruit of that one tree. In other words, **that one tree gave them a kind of freedom of choice.**
17. But, as we noted in Ellen White’s words above, **there was perhaps an even more important reason why that tree was placed there. That tree was to be a protection for them.** Satan would not be allowed to follow them wherever they went throughout the garden, continually tempting them to disobey God. How do we know that Satan was limited to that one tree? Clearly, God forbade Adam and Eve from going there. And if you were Satan and you wanted to tempt Adam and Eve and you were free to go anywhere in the garden, wouldn’t you go to the tree of life? Thus, we see that it was never God’s intention to limit their freedom or to prohibit them from enjoying the fruits in the garden; **He was only trying to protect them from Satan whose only access to them in the garden was that one tree.**
18. Ellen White suggested that the tree of knowledge had been put on other worlds; but, they had rejected it, and it was finally removed. But, our planet was different.

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made “in the image of God,” and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth.—Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1902 par. 1; *1SDABC* 1081.3; *TA* 48.1.

19. Notice Eve’s first response to Satan’s questioning. Read Genesis 3:2-3. Eve knew clearly that she was supposed to stay away from that tree; and, in fact, although we do not have

record that God had not said so, she told the Devil that they were not even to touch it.

20. And then, Satan unleashed his most deceptive and dangerous lie, saying: “You will not surely die.” (Genesis 3:4) So, what was she supposed to do? There were two remarkable beings: God Himself on the one side; and that talking serpent in the tree, making diametrically opposite statements.
21. Read Genesis 3:5. It is true that by eating of the tree, they would come to know both good and evil. But, God had been trying to prevent them from ever knowing evil. The Devil was trying to suggest that God was not being honest with them and, in fact, was withholding something from them which was very good.
22. Can you think of other areas in life—even in your life—where Satan has tried to deceive by mixing truth with error? How many churches and other religions mix truth with error? Does our church ever do that?
23. Genesis 1:26 tells us that Adam and Eve were made to be like God, that is, in His image. So, in fact, they were already like God. They did not need to eat of the forbidden fruit to become more “like God.”
24. But, again, the way in which they would become more like God was in knowing good and evil, or knowing everything. There are many things that we are better off not knowing: All types of sin; many modern destructive habits such as smoking, drinking, and using illegal drugs; tasting unhealthy types of foods; and, of course, many forms of entertainment.
25. Think of the vast array of fantastic foods that God had provided for them in the Garden of Eden. Why did they need to eat that one fruit from that one tree? But, that is what happened. Adam and Eve should have learned from the mistakes of Lucifer/Satan and his followers in heaven.
26. Read Genesis 3:6-7. What happened when Adam’s and Eve’s eyes were opened? They discovered that they were naked! They were no longer covered with that special God-given light. They had separated themselves from God through their disobedience. Then, they felt guilty, ashamed, and frightened. What do you think actually changed when they sinned? They lost their covering of light. And they were no longer allowed to eat of the tree of life. Can you think of other changes that must have taken place at that point? Are there any forbidden fruits that we might be tempted to partake of in our day?
27. We are told that someday we will see the plan of salvation in 3-D, living color, spread out across the skies in a kind of panorama. (GC 666.3) We will be able to trace the terrible history of sin from its origin in heaven to its final end with the destruction of Satan. But, it may be a long time before we fully understand all the details and implications of that sad experiment. Clearly, Adam’s and Eve’s relationships with God changed. Their relationship with each other changed. Their relationship to the environment and to the other creatures on this earth also changed. They were specifically told that the serpent had become their enemy. (Genesis 3:15, *GNB*, “I will make you and the woman hate each other.”)
28. We will, no doubt, spend eternity studying the plan of salvation. Certainly, that must include many details about sin and its effects. We do not know exactly all that it will involve.

Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. **All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the**

**blood of the Lamb.** . . The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary is our only hope in this world, and it will be our theme in the world to come.—Ellen G. White, *ST*, December 30, 1889 par. 4; *5SDABC* 1132.8; *OHC* 45.4. [Bold type is added.]

29. Read Genesis 3:10-19. Notice how changed Adam's and Eve's thinking had become. God called out to them. They were trying to hide from God! They were ready to blame God for their sins! God gently reminded them that in order to be restored to a relationship with Him, they needed to admit responsibility for what they had done.
30. God also cursed the serpent. This is not just a matter of causing humans to despise snakes but also a clear condemnation of the one who had used the snake for his own diabolical purposes. Eve was told that she would have pain in childbirth, and Adam was told that he would have to toil and sweat to raise the food that they would eat.
31. Being expelled from the garden, they were faced with a choice: Continue in their rebellion or seek to return to a right relationship with God. The other creatures were no longer in full subjection to Adam and Eve.
32. What evidences can you see in our world still suggesting that God is good and that He is very generous with us?

Look around: we can see not only incredible beauty but incredible design as well, all of which testifies to our Creator's love. For instance, think about such things as apples, oranges, tangerines, strawberries, blueberries, avocados, tomatoes, lemons, limes, watermelons, almonds, pecans, pears, plums, carrots, peas, bananas, pineapples, pomegranates, broccoli, kale, brussels sprouts, onions, raspberries, cherries, celery, papaya, eggplant, rhubarb, spinach, melons, and on and on. Is it just by chance that all these are so tasty (well, some people don't like brussels sprouts!), so good for us, and just happen to grow out of the ground bearing their own seed? Of course not.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Friday, January 8.

33. What evidences can you see in the world around you of the destructive consequences of sin? For a start, what about animals killing and eating other animals!
34. It was God's plan for us to live forever in perfect peace and harmony in the beautiful setting of the Garden of Eden. But, look what has happened to us!
35. What is implied by Genesis 3:15? Is that truly good news?
36. How does the life and death of Jesus help to resolve the problems produced by that first sin?
37. When God told us that the serpent is to be our enemy, was He just warning about poisonous snakes? Or, was there a much larger danger He was trying to warn us about? Why is it that despite the fact that God declared Satan to be our enemy, so many people still think of God as our enemy?
38. In the great controversy, the real question that human beings have to understand and answer for themselves is, "Who is telling us the truth?" Is sin deadly? Or, was God lying to us as Satan still insists? Satan claims that sin is perfectly safe. How many humans act as if that is true?
39. Jesus came and lived His life on this earth. When His ministry was nearing its conclusion, He warned His disciples several times that He was going up to Jerusalem to be handed over to the Pharisees and Sadducees and end up being killed by the Romans.

40. Was it really the Romans who killed Jesus? The real answer is, "No!" Jesus died of sin. That occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane where we are told He fell dying to the ground; (DA 693.1) and later, it occurred again after being crucified on Calvary as He experienced the ultimate separation from God which results in death. (Isaiah 59:2)
41. The life and death of Jesus has given us the opportunity as individuals to answer the questions raised in the Garden of Eden. We can choose to live as much as possible the kind of life Jesus lived and continue to live for eternity; or, we can choose to continue in our rebellion as recommended by Satan, and we will die the kind of death which Jesus died, separated from God. Are those issues completely clear to you? Which will you choose?

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