

On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope Rebellion in a Perfect Universe

Lesson #1 for October 1, 2022

Scriptures: 1 John 4:7-16; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Isaiah 14:12-15; Revelation 12.

1. As we begin a new series of lessons, consider this:

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] 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.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, September 24.†§

2. Adam and Eve were forewarned about the Devil, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and what might happen at that tree. (Genesis 2:17) But, Eve: (1) Accidentally wandered near the tree; (2) Became engaged in conversation by the Devil, speaking through a serpent; and (3) Believed his lies, distrusting God. As a result, rebellion against God which began with war in heaven spread to this earth.
3. Today, in our world, we see a mixture of good and evil. The roses with their beautiful looks and fragrance also have thorns. Birds such as the toucan which are very beautiful, attack and eat eggs and chicks from other birds, etc. Human beings can be loving, kind, and generous; however, they can also be vicious, hateful, even violent. All of this, of course, is the result of sin which began with Lucifer beside the throne of God in heaven.

1 John 4:8,16: ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for **God is love**....

¹⁶And we ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us.

God is love, and those who live in love live in union with God and God lives in union with them.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., 1 John 4:8,16). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].†‡

[BSG:] The fact that “God is love” (*1 John 4:8, 16, NKJV*) conveys at least three basic implications. **First**, love by its very nature cannot exist closed in itself but must be expressed. (What kind of love is not expressed?) God’s love is shared *internally* among the Three Persons of the Godhead, and *externally* in His relationship with all His creatures. **Second**, all that God does is an expression of His unconditional and unchangeable love. This includes His creative works, His redemptive actions, and even the manifestations of His punitive judgments. Actually, “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.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 762. [762.3] And **third**, since God is love and all that He does expresses His love, He cannot be the originator of sin, which

is in direct opposition to His own character.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, September 25.^{†§}

4. As you look around in the world, is it easy to distinguish between the evidences of God's love still existing from creation and the evidences of evil woven in by the Devil?
5. So, why did God risk creating a universe with beings who have freedom? God is love, and love cannot be expressed within oneself. Love must be directed toward others. And love is the very basis for God's government. Love is impossible without freedom and choice.

Mark 12:30-31: [Jesus said (essentially quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18):] ³⁰ “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.**” ³¹ The second most important commandment is this: ‘**Love your neighbour as you love yourself.**’ There is no other commandment more important than these two.”—*Good News Bible.*^{*††}

6. Without freedom to choose, love is impossible. And God is not willing to live in a universe without having free creatures who are capable of loving Him in return. See the handout entitled “Love” on Theox.org posted under “Teachers Guides” then “General Topics.”

https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Love_16.pdf

7. Thinking about this issue, some people wonder why God, knowing everything before it happens, would create a being such as Lucifer. Having created Lucifer, does that make God responsible for evil? No. But, **it does make Him responsible for freedom!** God did not intend for sin to exist; but, He allowed it to exist. But, more than that, He made provision for those who fell into sin to be redeemed by coming Himself and dying that death which is a result of sin, making it clear to us what the choices are.
8. Do we recognize the implications of exercising our free will? These implications might not only affect us, but also even those with whom we come in contact.
9. So, how did sin enter our perfect universe?

Ezekiel 28:12-19: ¹² “Mortal man,” he said, “grieve for the fate that is waiting for the king of Tyre. Tell him what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: you were once an example of perfection. How wise and handsome you were! ¹³ You lived in Eden, the garden of God, and wore gems of every kind: rubies and diamonds; topaz, beryl, carnelian, and jasper; sapphires, emeralds, and garnets. You had ornaments of gold. They were made for you on the day you were created. ¹⁴ I put a terrifying angel there to guard you. You lived on my holy mountain and walked among sparkling gems. ¹⁵ **Your conduct was perfect from the day you were created until you began to do evil.** ¹⁶ You were busy buying and selling, and this led you to violence and sin. So I forced you to leave my holy mountain, and the angel who guarded you drove you away from the sparkling gems. ¹⁷ You were proud of being handsome, and your fame made you act like a fool. Because of this I hurled you to the ground and left you as a warning to other kings. ¹⁸ You did such evil in buying and selling that your places of worship were corrupted. So I set fire to the city and burnt it to the ground. All who look at you now see you reduced to ashes. ¹⁹ You are gone, gone for ever, [sic] and all the nations that had come to know you are terrified, afraid that they will share your fate.”—*Good News Bible.*^{*††} [These last comments refer to ancient Tyre.][‡]

10. Much of the book of Ezekiel was written in end-time, symbolic language. In many instances, specific entities (such as persons, animals, and objects) and local events were used to represent and describe broader cosmic and/or historical realities. In Ezekiel 28:1-10, the LORD spoke of the king of Tyre (Tyre itself was a prosperous ancient Phoenician port city) as a rich and proud ruler who was only a “man” but who claimed to be a god and who even sat (he claimed) in the throne of the gods.

Ezekiel 28:1-10: ¹ The LORD spoke to me. ² “Mortal man,” he said, “tell the ruler of Tyre what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to him: puffed up with pride, you claim to be a god. You say that like a god you sit on a throne, surrounded by the seas. You may pretend to be a god, but, no, you are mortal, not divine. ³You think you are wiser than Danel, [Daniel] that no secret can be kept from you. ⁴Your wisdom and skill made you rich with treasures of gold and silver. ⁵You made clever business deals and kept on making profits. How proud you are of your wealth!

⁶ “Now then, this is what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: because you think you are as wise as a god, ⁷I will bring ruthless enemies to attack you. They will destroy all the beautiful things you have acquired by your skill and wisdom. ⁸They will kill you and send you to a watery grave. ⁹When they come to kill you, will you still claim that you are a god? When you face your murderers, you will be mortal and not at all divine. ¹⁰You will die like a dog at the hand of godless foreigners. I, the Sovereign LORD, have given the command.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] Then, in Ezekiel 28:12–19, this historical reality becomes an analogy to describe the original fall of Lucifer in the heavenly courts. So, the king of Tyre, who was a human being living “ ‘in the midst of the seas” ’ ” (*Ezek. 28:2, 8, NKJV*), now represents “ ‘the anointed cherub who covers,” ’ ” (*Ezek. 28:14, NKJV*) living “ ‘in Eden, the garden of God,” ’ ” (*Ezek. 28:13, NKJV*) and “ ‘upon the holy mountain of God” ’ ” (*Ezek. 28:14*).

A crucial statement in the whole account is found in Ezekiel 28:15, which says, “ ‘ “You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you” ’ ” (*NKJV*). Hence, Lucifer’s perfection included the potential for evil, the potential to do wrong, and that was because, as a moral being, Lucifer possessed free will, part of what it means to be a perfect being.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, September 27.*§

11. No reason existed for Lucifer to rebel. There was no excuse for sin, and there never will be.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **Sin** is a mysterious, unexplainable thing. **There was no reason for its existence; to seek to explain it is to seek to give a reason for it, and that would be to justify it.** Sin appeared in a perfect universe, a thing that was shown to be **inexcusable**.—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*,* April 28, 1890, par. 2; *The Truth About Angels** 30.1.††

12. The great controversy theme pervades Scripture although it is not always immediately obvious. But, the themes themselves are represented by certain individuals and places. For example, see Salem, Mount Zion, Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem which all represent God’s kingdom. By contrast, the other theme is represented by Babel, Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and Satan, whose counterfeit domain stands behind all of that.

13. Throughout Scripture, we see times when God calls/called His people out of Babylonia, or Babylon itself, and end-time Babylon. (See Genesis 11:31-12:9 when God called Abraham out of Babylonia/Chaldea.) Many years later God called the Jews back out of Babylon, following their exile. (See Ezra 2.) And finally, in the book Revelation, God's end-time people are called out of Babylon in Revelation 14:8;18. God's people are called out of that Babylonian heresy to Mount Zion, the city of Jerusalem, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. (Revelation 14:1; 21:1-3,10) God is constantly encouraging us to leave evil and come to Him. **See the handout: "The Great Controversy Described in Scripture" on www.Theox.org posted under "Teachers Guides" then "General Topics."**
14. How does the Bible describe the original rebellion of Satan?
Isaiah 14:12-15: ¹² "King of Babylonia, bright morning star, you have fallen from heaven! In the past you conquered nations, but now you have been thrown to the ground. ¹³You were determined to climb up to heaven and to place your throne above the highest stars. You thought you would sit like a king on that mountain in the north where the gods assemble. ¹⁴You said you would climb to the tops of the clouds and be like the Almighty. ¹⁵But instead, you have been brought down to the deepest part of the world of the dead."—*Good News Bible*.*
15. In the book of Daniel, we see the two conflicting themes played out in several different stories. Initially, Daniel was called to interpret the dream which King Nebuchadnezzar experienced. Daniel recounted the dream and then explained to Nebuchadnezzar that he was the head of gold. But, Nebuchadnezzar did not want any other nation to succeed him. So, he built a statue entirely of gold as recorded in Daniel 3. He threatened anyone refusing to bow down to his gold statue with being thrown into a fiery furnace. And we, of course, having read the story, know what happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
16. Both Isaiah and Ezekiel tell interesting stories, starting with the story of a haughty and oppressive human king and then expanding that story to include Satan/Lucifer who stood or stands behind those individuals.
17. Read what Isaiah said about the king of Babylonia as recorded in Isaiah 14:3-11. Review Isaiah 14:12-15 as quoted in Item #14 above.
18. Why is it so easy for us as human beings to slip into the pattern that Lucifer/Satan started practicing, the pattern of selfishness and sin? But, for those who understand something about the life and death of Jesus, how could we ever be proud and boastful?
19. The history of the conflict between God and Satan is summarized briefly in Revelation 12. The church is represented by a righteous woman who is attacked by a dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns. We are told that this dragon dragged stars from the sky, referring to the war in heaven and Satan's fall and angels being separated from heaven. And when Jesus was born to the "woman," Satan did everything he possibly could to destroy Him. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, Satan turned his attention to the Christian church and persecuted Christians for many years. As you can imagine, knowing something about the history of Satan as we approach the end of this world's history, he is furious and determined to do everything he possibly can to prevent God's faithful people from living up to God's plan for them.
20. We really do not know much about the war that took place in heaven. For example, what kind of weapons were used in the war in heaven? In any case, it was primarily a war of ideas:

Love versus selfishness; Christ, Michael the Archangel, the One who was like God, versus Satan, the one who wanted to be like God.

21. Various explanations have been given as to why in the Bible Jesus is sometimes called *Michael the Archangel*. At the most basic level, it is important to recognize that the name *Michael* means “Who is like God?” or “the One who is like God.” But, it is also possible to see that clearly demonstrated in Scripture itself. First Thessalonians 4:16 (NIV*†) tells us: “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with **the voice of the archangel** and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” That seems to suggest that the LORD Himself will have the voice of the Archangel; but, there is even more evidence.

John 5:28-29: ²⁸“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will **hear his voice** ²⁹and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.”—*New International Version*.*†

22. Thus, by comparing these two passages, we see that the voice of the archangel is also described as the voice of God.
23. **Jude 9** talks about the *chief angel Michael* (GNB*) fighting with the Devil over the body of Moses. Certainly, no one other than Jesus Christ could have fought with the Devil over the body of Moses.
24. There are other passages in Scripture where God is referred to as *the angel the LORD*. For example, see Exodus 3:1-6 (GNB*). Compare Acts 7:30-33.
25. What do we know about the beginning of the great controversy in heaven and that war that resulted? Notice these very helpful explanations from the writings of Ellen White.

[EGW:] 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, *Redemption; or the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness* (2 Red)* 18.2 [1877];†† *Confrontation**¶ 21.2.†† Compare *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1163.3.

26. Lucifer/Satan and his followers rebelled in the very presence of God with the full knowledge of His love, character, and government. **There was nothing more that God could have done to convince them to repent**. God offered Satan a chance to repent; Satan refused.
27. So, how did it all begin?

[EGW:] 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** 22.2.††

[EGW:] Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong. He saw that “the Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Psalm 145:17); that the divine statutes are just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at that time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had left his position as covering cherub, yet **if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator’s wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God’s great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. The time had come for a final decision; he must fully yield to the divine sovereignty or place himself in open rebellion. He nearly reached the decision to return, but pride forbade him. It was too great a sacrifice for one who had been so highly honored to confess that he had been in error, that his imaginings were false, and to yield to the authority which he had been working to prove unjust.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 39.1.†† [Compare *The Great Controversy* 495.3.]†

[EGW:] Rejecting with disdain the arguments and entreaties of the loyal angels, he denounced them as deluded slaves. The preference shown to Christ he declared an act of injustice both to himself and to all the heavenly host, and announced that he would no longer submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs. He would never again acknowledge the supremacy of Christ. **He had determined to claim the honor which should have been given him, and take command of all who would become his followers; and he promised those who would enter his ranks a new and better government, under which all would enjoy freedom.** Great numbers of the angels signified their purpose to accept him as their leader. **Flattered by the favor with which his advances were received, he hoped to win all the angels to his side, to become equal with God Himself, and to be obeyed by the entire host of heaven.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 40.1.††

[EGW:] Many were disposed to heed this counsel, to repent of their disaffection, and seek to be again received into favor with the Father and His Son. But Lucifer had another deception ready. The mighty revolter now declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return; that he was acquainted with the divine law, and knew that God would not forgive. **He declared that all who should submit to the authority of Heaven would be stripped of their honor, degraded from their position.** For himself, he was determined never again to acknowledge the authority of Christ. The only course remaining for him and his followers, he said, was to assert their liberty, and gain by force the rights which had not been willingly accorded them.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 40.3-41.0.††

[EGW:] Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. **The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather**

than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question.

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results.

The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. **Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 42.4-43.0.† [Note her words: *perpetual testimony* and *perpetual safeguard*.]‡

28. God took upon Himself the responsibility of dealing with the terrible emergency. God had told Adam and Eve that sin would ultimately cause death. (See Genesis 2:17. Compare Romans 6:23.) So, Jesus died the second death, a direct consequence of sin and separation from God, His Father, the only Source of life. That was in direct response to Satan's lie to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

29. So, why doesn't Satan recognize the truth and give up his fight against God? Satan has been claiming his lies and following them for so many millennia that he has come to believe them. Up to the very end at the third coming, he will still be trying to attack the New Jerusalem and trying to defeat God! Perhaps we should conclude that "misery loves company!"

30. The Bible warns us of Satan's behavior.

1 Peter 5:8: Be alert, be on the watch! Your enemy, the Devil, roams round like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.—*Good News Bible*.*

31. Paul told us how to prepare.

Ephesians 6:10-20: ¹⁰ Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all the armour that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. ¹² For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. ¹³ So put on God's armour now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.

¹⁴ So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight round your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, ¹⁵ and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace. ¹⁶ At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. ¹⁷ And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you. ¹⁸ Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's

people. ¹⁹And pray also for me, that God will give me a message when I am ready to speak, so that I may speak boldly and make known the gospel's secret. ²⁰For the sake of this gospel I am an ambassador, though now I am in prison. Pray that I may be bold in speaking about the gospel as I should.—*Good News Bible*.*

32. We have documented well the truth that God is love. We know that He wants to express that love to all His creatures throughout the universe. But, Lucifer, standing beside the throne of God in heaven, became jealous of Jesus and led to that rebellion which has resulted in sin. How is that even possible?

[BSG:] What had been previously unbelievable became a tragic reality. The wise and beautiful creature, the anointed guardian cherub (Hebrew: *kerub mimshakh hasokek*; *Ezek. 28:14, RSV*), called “Lucifer, son of the morning” (Hebrew: *helel ben shakhar*; *Isa. 14:12, NKJV*)—also translated as “the shining one,” “the morning star,” or “the son of the dawn”—rose up against the eternal, holy, caring, and loving Creator and presented unjustifiable accusations to exalt himself. **Lucifer’s self-centeredness, charm, lies, deceit, and selfishness divided the angels and destroyed the perfect peace of heaven.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 13.†§

33. Lucifer claimed that he was fighting for more freedom and that he was trying to benefit the angels! Remember that Lucifer, the name means “lightbearer,” was actually given some of the names of God, *the Lightbearer, the Morning Star*, etc. The creature who was given a position next to the throne of God as a covering cherub to protect and support God’s government ended up trying to overthrow it! **The Bible describes Satan’s rebellion as the mystery of wickedness/iniquity.** (2 Thessalonians 2:7) By contrast, 1 Timothy 3:6 describes the mystery of godliness as Jesus: (1) Coming to this earth, (2) Living as a human being a perfect life, (3) Dying that awful death, and, finally, (4) Being taken up to heaven. This is also described in Philippians 2:6-11. This will all be seen by all humans and the whole universe at the time of the panorama at the third coming. That will bring the great controversy to an end.

Philippians 2:6-11: ⁶Who, being in very nature [Footnote: *Or in the form of*] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue [even Lucifer] acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—*The New International Version*.* (2011). (Philippians 2:6-11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.†§

[BSG:] Evil is irrational and full of disorder; so it is impossible to find a logical explanation for its existence. There is no cause for it. Isaiah 14 describes the

circumstances of Satan's fall (not its cause), namely pride, and Ezekiel simply states that the anointed cherub was perfect/blameless from his creation " '[until] iniquity was found' " in him (*Ezek. 28:15, NKJV*). By disconnecting himself from God, Satan broke his relationship with Him and consequently cut himself off from the only Source of life, which results in dying. All creatures, including angels in heaven and humans on earth, were created in total dependence upon God. Only by maintaining that love relationship and cultivating God's presence is the risk of disobedience and rebellion eliminated and abundant life secured. Knowing God and His character, cherishing an appreciation of His goodness, and fostering a grateful attitude is the way forward.

There was no reason for rebellion in the perfect universe governed by love. No defect was present that would necessitate the improvement of God's style of rulership. We may describe the circumstances, when and what happened, but we will never be able to find a justification for the rebellion, because no justification for it existed. God allowed the evil because He chose to create not automatons or robots but beings with a free will in order that they might love freely.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 14.†‡§ [Brackets inside the paragraph are in the Bible study guide; brackets in the introduction are added.] [There never was any excuse for sin/evil.]‡

34. Many people have the idea that this world has always been controlled by two different forces: Good and evil. Some suggest that those are actually two different gods.

[BSG:] We do not believe that the universe is ruled by two rival gods: on the one hand, the living God, who is the God of good; and on the other hand, Lucifer, the god of evil. This dualism is foreign to biblical revelation and not compatible with its teaching. The Scriptures attest that God created an exceptionally glorious and wise creature (" 'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty' " [*Ezek. 28:12, NLT*]) who later rebelled against God. **Thus, Lucifer, God's blameless creation, became Satan.** The apostle John describes the adversary in the following terms: "that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (*Rev. 12:9, ESV*). Incredible and shocking thought! The one who was in the very presence of God, who was in the heavenly Eden in the celestial sanctuary, that very person rebelled against the loving God. His stunning actions against his Creator seem unreal: the creation dared to oppose his King and Commander-in-Chief....

Ezekiel 28:15 states that in the anointed cherub was found "wickedness" (*NIV*) or "iniquity" (*NKJV*). The Hebrew term is *avelah*, meaning "injustice" or "unrighteousness." The one who was perfect and who should guard the integrity of God's law to secure heaven's government was accusing God of not being good and right, namely, of being unjust. Very unfair accusations! The term "trade" (*Ezek. 28:16, NKJV*) is in Hebrew *rekulah* and is derived from the root *rakal*, signifying "go about," or "go from one another," either for (1) trade or (2) gossip/slander. The context makes it evident that trade or business cannot be in mind here because it would be the only place in the Hebrew Bible where trading would be something sinful, and that does not make sense. Therefore, the word, rather, **suggests that the guardian cherub was going around and gossiping about God, accusing Him of injustice, gossiping**

about His character and spreading lies. Lucifer sowed mistrust and unbelief and led others away from believing and following the loving God. Isaiah describes Lucifer's motives in terms of pride. His hubris was so strong that he wanted to be equal to God, to sit on God's throne, to make himself the king and uplift himself to the position of deity (*Isa. 14:13*). Such unbelievable hubris!—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 15.^{†‡§} [Brackets inside the paragraph are in the Bible study guide; brackets in the introduction are added.][‡]

35. There is another interesting part of this whole picture found in Isaiah 14:13.

Isaiah 14:13: You were determined to climb up to heaven and to place your throne above the highest stars. You thought you would sit like a king on that **mountain in the north where the gods assemble**.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [That expression in Hebrew is carried into Greek as Armageddon.][‡]

[BSG:] The prophet Isaiah describes Lucifer's fall from heaven in the past tense (*Isa. 14:12*). Ezekiel states that he was driven “ ‘in disgrace from the mount of God” ’ ” and was expelled (*Ezek. 28:16, NIV*). Then Ezekiel reveals what happened in Lucifer's heart, namely, how he sinned in his mind by cultivating pride. Carefully notice the nature of his five big “I” statements: (1) “ ‘I will ascend to the heavens’ ”; (2) “ ‘I will raise my throne above’ ”; (3) “ ‘I will sit enthroned . . . on the utmost heights’ ”; (4) “ ‘I will ascend above the tops of the clouds’ ”; and (5) “ ‘I will make myself like the Most High’ ” (*Isa. 14:13, 14, NIV, emphasis supplied*). This self-exaltation in Lucifer's heart is confirmed in Ezekiel 28:17: “ ‘Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor” ’ ” (*NIV*). Finally, after this self-glorification, his complete destruction is presented in the future tense: “ ‘Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol [the grave], to the lowest depths of the Pit’ ” (*Isa. 14:15, NKJV*). The prophet Ezekiel concurs that the Lord will exterminate Lucifer, who became Satan, the adversary. His annihilation is so sure that Ezekiel uses the prophetic perfect tense to express that certainty: “ ‘I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. . . . You have come to a horrible end and will be no more” ’ ” (*Ezek. 28:18, 19, NIV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 15-16.^{‡§} [Brackets inside the paragraph are in the Bible study guide; brackets in the introduction are added.][‡]

[BSG:] Why did the Lord decide in His infinite wisdom not to destroy Lucifer immediately when evil thoughts originated in his heart? Or why did God not destroy Lucifer right after he started secretly working against the divine government, thus preventing the rebellion from spreading broadly?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 16.[‡]

36. Do we recognize how serious sin is? What about pride? How do envy and pride affect relationships?

37. Does understanding more about how sin arose make us more determined to avoid it and overcome Satan, its author?

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