

## 8. God Made Man Upright? What Happened?

**Biblical material:** Ecclesiastes 7.

### Quotes

- The fall of man is written in too legible characters not to be understood: Those that deny it, by their denying, prove it. *George Whitefield*
- Men will lie on their backs, talking about the fall of man, and never make an effort to get up. *Henry David Thoreau*
- Why do we lament over the fall of man? We were not driven out of Paradise because of it, but because of the Tree of Life, that we might not eat of it. *Rainer Maria Wilke*
- Unless your heart, your soul, and your whole being are behind every decision you make, the words from your mouth will be empty, and each action will be meaningless. Truth and confidence are the roots of happiness. *Kathleen Pedersen*

### Questions

If God is the creator, what of the existence of evil? How do we explain what exactly happened at the Fall? Does the doctrine of original sin mean that we are being punished for the sin of Adam and Eve? How does God look in all of this? And how do we understand the consequences of sin, what it really is, and how is it resolved?

### Discussion

Again we see a rather “depressing” side to the picture, with Solomon considering it is better to go to a funeral than a party! Is it really true that sorrow is better than laughter? In these proverbial snippets, Solomon’s wisdom seems as tortured as he was, conflicted as to his own state and remembering his guilt for a wasted life.

In so many ways then he parallels our own thoughts—the one moment content, the next moment anxious. It is almost as if two forces are in conflict here in the mind of Solomon, and this makes us reflect on the real conflict of the great controversy. Right at the end of this section Solomon hits the real question—if God really did make “mankind upright,” then what went wrong? And here is the real question. For much of the above is resolved as we understand the real issues that have arisen in God’s universe. The recognition that God is under attack by Satan the accuser, that this world is a long way from what God intended, and an enemy has sown weeds among the wheat—all this provides insight into the “human condition.”

So what did happen, and where are we in this grand scheme of things, this great controversy between God and his accuser, his highest created being?

### Comments

“I think I’ve learned exactly how the fall of man occurred in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, and Adam said one day, ‘Wow, Eve, here we are, at one with nature, at one with God, we’ll never age, we’ll never die, and all our dreams come true the instant that we have them.’ And Eve said, ‘Yeah... it’s just not enough is it?’” *Bill Hicks*

“Adventist understanding of the cosmic controversy has provided the church with a rational, integrated worldview. Every biblical teaching has its place and significance within its

theological scope. The concept provides a “window” on the Sovereign Creator-God—His character, law, and government. It exposes the mystery of sin—what it is, how it began, and why it continues.” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, p. 1003. See also *Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #8*.

“Lucifer, or “light bearer”, “teacher of truth”, because of jealousy and distrust began to spread lies and misrepresentations about our heavenly Father. Thus he became not Lucifer—a bearer of light—but a “lie bearer” or Satan, the adversary of God.

“Presuming to be very pious, he began to charge that God was arbitrary (not respectful of the freedom of His creatures), exacting, unforgiving, and severe. Thus he hoped to turn the angels away from God and thus to win them to worship himself. It seems unbelievable that a creature could actually do such a thing, but as evidence look at Isaiah 14. He even asked his Creator to get down on His knees and worship him in the wilderness of temptation—see Matt. 4. The angels must have been stunned to imagine one of their own kind—the former Lucifer, but now Satan - asking their Creator to do such a thing.

“Satan certainly wasted no time in sharing with humans his accusations that God is selfish and an untrustworthy liar—see Gen. 3. God watched until one third of His angels agreed with Satan that God was not trustworthy. This means that even the infinite, sovereign God could not convince one third of His angels that Satan’s charges were false. Finally, war broke out in heaven. And, like it or not, every one of us is caught up in the consequences of that war.

“The future of God’s entire family depends on the outcome of this war. Compared with this great issue, our personal salvation is relatively inconsequential. For if God does not win this war, then salvation would have no meaning. This does not leave out our salvation, for the way in which God has worked to win you and me is the way in which He has won the war. So even though God would really love to save all of us, He could fail to save every one of us and still win the war. The rest of His creatures throughout the universe have already seen sufficient evidence—both regarding Satan and regarding God—that they are fully convinced that our heavenly Father is fully trustworthy.” *A. Graham Maxwell, Conversations about God #1*.

### **Ellen White Comments**

The original character of Solomon, as manifested during the earlier years of his reign, was bold, honorable, and judicious. Unparalleled success would have been his, had he continued to seek it in God. But there was everything about him to flatter his pride, and to indulge his appetite and passions. He was fond of wine, and his naturally clear intellect was often clouded by its effects. He was absolute monarch of Israel, holding in his power the lives and property of his people over all his wide-spread domain. As his mental powers became enervated and degraded by his dissipation and lascivious habits, he grew hasty, fitful, and tyrannical....

His giant mind degenerated, and he could be molded like wax by the unscrupulous persons who studied his caprices and played upon his weaknesses. He endeavored to unite heathenism with the faith of the Hebrews, mistaking his own unscrupulous license for liberality and merciful toleration. But his attempt to unite darkness and light, in serving God and Baal, was like mingling ink and pure water. The water does not impart its crystal clearness to the ink, but, on the contrary, the ink gives its dark color to the water, making a murky compound. Purity cannot unite with impurity without being stained by the contact. This was the result developed by Solomon in his attempted union of God and Belial. He came finally to disregard all religions.  
{HR, May 1, 1878}

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