

1. Creation and Fall (4Q 2018—Oneness in Christ)

Biblical material: Gen. 1:26, 27; 1 John 4:7, 8, 16; Gen. 3:16–19; Gen. 11:1–9; Gal. 3:29; Deut. 7:6–11; Gen. 15:5, 6.

Quotes

- If the account given in Genesis is really true, ought we not, after all, to thank this serpent? He was the first schoolmaster, the first advocate of learning, the first enemy of ignorance, the first to whisper in human ears the sacred word liberty. *Robert Ingersoll*
- 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*
- Men will lie on their backs, talking about the fall of man, and never make an effort to get up. *Henry David Thoreau*
- Original sin is the only rational solution of the undeniable fact of the deep, universal and early manifested sinfulness of men in all ages, of every class, and in every part of the world. *Charles Hodge*

Questions

What do Creation and the Fall have to do with unity? How do the vast varieties of stars, planets, plants, wildlife etc. show the difference between unity and uniformity? What would you say are the fundamental principles of God's Creation? How did Lucifer's rebellion change everything—what was the real issue?

Bible summary

Gen. 1:26, 27 records God making us in "his/our" image. 1 John 4:7, 8 tells us that love comes from God, for God is love. In Gen. 3:16–19 God explains the immediate consequences of sin, while in Gen. 11:1–9 we see further results in terms of the Tower of Babel. However, we're told: "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's children, and you are heirs of the promise!" Gal. 3:29 FBV. Deut. 7:6–11 recounts the choosing of the children of Israel, and we are now spiritual Israel. Abraham trusted God's promise (Gen. 15:5, 6).

Comment

Why was Creation declared "good" and "very good"? Because there was harmony throughout the universe, in which each component part relating in accord with every other part. The fundamental principle of God's universe is that of the other, first demonstrated by God himself. In this way there is no selfishness and egotism—all seek the best of the whole, thinking not of themselves but of the wider aspect of all the other parts of divine Creation.

The self-centeredness that is at the heart of sin breaks the whole system. The Fall was not the issue of eating the "wrong kind of fruit," as someone once told me. It was choosing the lies of the Devil over the truth of God. It was refusing to believe what God both said and stood for—the integrity of the whole of his Creation. Most of all it was to

think that God was the kind of person the Devil said he was—wanting to keep good things from them, unwilling to allow them to truly “know.”

The unity that preceded the rebellion of Lucifer was one that was simply assumed—that every sentient being would live in cooperation with the rest of Creation. In the same way that law was something almost “unthought of” by the angels, so too the unity of God’s creation was a “given.” It was based on mutually-reciprocated love. That love was perverted by Lucifer into self-love.

The Fall of Adam and Eve brought that separation to Planet Earth. The consequences were spelled out by God in Genesis 3, not as divinely-imposed retribution but as a natural consequence of rebellion against the fundamental laws of good and right. In Genesis 11 we see the heights to which such rebellion led—a desire to claim, like Lucifer, rulership over the world. God’s way of preserving truth and providing the remedy was through Abraham and the children on Israel.

But as spiritual children of Israel, we have a long way to go. God is calling us back to him—to trust him for free and full salvation, for complete healing of the damage done. But like rebellious, reluctant children, we find it hard to accept such grace.

The tragedy of the Fall has led to many ideas about what went wrong. To some this is God being “picky” or even malevolent, setting up Adam and Eve with the expectation that they would fail. Some medieval theologians considered the fall from grace as something positive, the “felix culpa,” or “happy sin,” because then it allowed God to demonstrate how much he loves us and to show his grace which would not have been possible if we had not sinned. Others have questioned the justice of God in creating beings liable to sin and then punishing them for having these faults. Some believe that the Fall teaches the doctrine of original sin, which makes every human being liable for the sins of our first parents, a punishment visited by God on all generations—which hardly makes him out to be a God of justice. Others too dismiss the concept of the Fall as a “fairy tale” produced only to explain the world, having no relevance today.

It’s interesting that the Devil should so want to confuse humanity about the Fall and its consequences. Every image of God noted in the previous descriptions paints God in an unpleasant light. Either he does not exist, does not care, does not act justly, does not demonstrate grace, or does not truly love us.

All such concepts are false. Only by understanding the penalty of sin as an innate consequence of the broken relationship with God can we see how God restores and repairs the damage done. Only by recognizing that God is not as the Devil has painted him will we ever wish to come to him for forgiveness and healing. And only as we accept his ongoing life-changing presence will we be made new and prepared for the life to come.

Ellen White Comments

From Adam’s day to ours there has been a succession of falls, each greater than the last, in every species of crime. God did not create a race of beings so devoid of health, beauty, and moral power as now exists in the world. Disease of every kind has been fearfully increasing upon the race. This has not been by God’s especial providence, but directly contrary to His will. It has come by man’s disregard of the very means which God has ordained to shield him from the terrible evils existing. {1BC 1082-3}