

# The Problem and the Answer



SABBATH—DECEMBER 25

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Genesis 1–3.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ ” (Genesis 3:9, NKJV).

**A FEW YEARS AGO, A TOY COMPANY MADE A DOLL CALLED CINDY SMART.** The doll could speak five languages. It was a good reader. It could tell time and could do simple math. Cindy was the first doll that would do what it was told. How could a doll do all these things?

The answer is good computer programming. A small computer in the doll's tummy lets the doll recognize numbers and letters. In many ways, the doll was more advanced than Chatty Cathy. Chatty Cathy was one of the first pull-string dolls that could speak.

But no matter how advanced Cindy Smart is, the doll is just a computer. It is programmed to do what it is told. Free will is not a choice for Cindy, no matter how smart the doll is.

We are different from Cindy Smart. We have the freedom to choose between right and wrong. Cindy does not have this choice. It is important to understand that we have freedom of choice when we study how sin began and how sin can be cured.

**A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Why must we be free to love God? Why must we be free to choose between right and wrong? What did God do about the fall of Adam and Eve?

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 1.

SUNDAY—DECEMBER 26

**TO LOVE GOD  
(Deuteronomy 6:5).**

**What do the following verses warn us to do? Why must we be free to do this? Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37; John 15:9-11.**

God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. He created everything by His word. His word reflects His mind (Psalm 33:6, 9; John 1:1-3). God made everything perfect and beautiful. God is love. Everything He does is an example of His perfect love and unlimited wisdom. God made every thinking person special and gave him or her the freedom to choose between right and wrong. This means that he or she could make bad choices. In this way, the risk of human rebellion was there from the beginning.

God wants us to have personal and satisfying fellowship with Him (Psalm 36:5-10). He also gives us wisdom, knowledge, love, and joy. These things can be real to people who are free to choose between right and wrong.

**When was the last time you ever heard of a happy computer? Why can a computer not be happy, loving, or loyal?**

To love God, we have to be free.

Moral freedom<sup>1</sup> cannot continue if we do not have the freedom to choose between right and wrong.

“God wants from all people the service that comes from love and respect for His character. God takes no pleasure in a forced obedience. To all people, He gives the freedom to choose, so they will choose to serve Him from their hearts.”  
—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

**There is a science-fiction story about a man who lost his wife. He hired a robot that looked, talked, felt, and acted exactly as his wife did. But he sent the robot away, because it was not his wife. What do you think the robot was missing? How does this connect with today’s lesson?**



God did not create us to be robots.

<sup>1</sup>moral freedom—the freedom to choose between right and wrong.

## MONDAY—DECEMBER 27

### SATAN'S REBELLION (John 8:44).

**Lucifer rebelled against God. What caused him to choose rebellion? What happened as a result of the rebellion? Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:14-17.**

Ellen White tells us that Lucifer slowly filled with self-pride. He withdrew from loving God and began to want God's great power. He was jealous of Jesus, who is the Creator and equal to God (Hebrews 1:1-3). Lucifer began working against God by suggesting that God's laws and requirements for worship were too strict. Ego (self-pride), ambition, self-love, bitterness, and a desire to be worshiped were the results of Lucifer's pride. God created Lucifer as a perfect angel. But Lucifer was free to rebel against God.

Bad attitudes<sup>2</sup> and wrong actions can lead to negative results. Disobeying God's law is sin (1 John 3:4). The wages (price) of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Lucifer was "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." He was "perfect in [his] ways" from the day God created him (Ezekiel 28:12, 15). He lived in the presence of God. He was the leader of the angels. So he did not have a good reason to rebel against God. Through his clever lies about God,

<sup>2</sup>attitudes—how people feel about ideas and things.

Lucifer tricked one-third of the angels into supporting him in his rebellion against God (Revelation 12:4). After his fall from heaven, Lucifer was renamed Satan. The name *Satan* means "enemy."

**"God was very patient with Lucifer. The feelings of rebellion had never been known in heaven before. Lucifer himself did not at first know the real meaning of his feelings. . . . But he did not push his feelings away. He did not see where these feelings would lead. God worked hard to make Lucifer see what was wrong with his feelings. . . . God made Lucifer see what would be the result of rebelling."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 39. Why did God not force Lucifer to stop his rebellion? What does that tell us about the great responsibility of moral freedom?**

## TUESDAY—DECEMBER 28

### SATAN'S PRISON ON EARTH (Luke 10:18).

**What happened to Satan after his rebellion in heaven? Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:4-9.**

Revelation 12:12 tells people to be careful, because the angry devil

has come down to us. The Eden story gives us an example of how the devil “leads the whole world down the wrong path” (Revelation 12:9, Nlrv).

**Compare<sup>3</sup> Genesis 3:1 with Genesis 2:16, 17. What trick did Satan use to set his trap?**

Satan changed a direct command from God to make the command as if he were saying what God had said. But Satan twisted what God had said. Satan mixed just enough truth with a lie in order to make his words sound right.



“ ‘Did God really say . . . ’ ”  
(Genesis 3:1, Nlrv).

**What does Genesis 3:2, 3 say about Eve’s knowledge of God’s command? What does Genesis 3:2, 3 say about her responsibility for her action?**

Satan deceived Eve (1 Timothy 2:14). But by her words, Eve showed that she knew what God told her to do. That is a powerful lesson for us. We could save ourselves a lot of trouble if we just obeyed God’s commands. Eve’s sin was terrible. But Adam was not tricked by Satan. He knew what he was doing when he took the fruit (Genesis 3:6). They could have saved themselves a lot of trouble by just obeying God and trusting that His way is the best way.

**What were the things about the tree that led Eve to disobey? Genesis 3:6. What principles<sup>4</sup> were at work there? How do these principles work today?**

**WEDNESDAY—DECEMBER 29**

**“AYECAH?” (Genesis 3:6-23).**

Adam and Eve disobeyed God. So all of humanity<sup>5</sup> suffers. Right away, the whole relationship between heaven and earth changed. The unity, peace, and balance of Eden were destroyed. Satan’s rebellion, once limited to himself and the fallen angels, had invaded a new world.

**What is the first thing God said to Adam and Eve? Genesis 3:9. Why are those words so important for us?**

<sup>3</sup>compare—show how things are the same.

<sup>4</sup>principles—general rules that help people to make specific rules.

<sup>5</sup>humanity—all the people of the world.

The Hebrew word *ayecah* means “Where are you?” The first thing God communicates to His fallen people is a question. This is the question He has been asking ever since. He does not ask it because He needs to know the answer. He asks it to force Adam and Eve to come face to face with what they had done.



“Where are you?” God asked Adam and Eve.

“*Ayecah?*” is not a criticism but the first of many pleas to Adam and Eve and all of their future children to admit their sinful condition. It is a plea to admit their need and to accept that God is here to save them.

“*Ayecah?*” God comes to them. God looks for them. We often see “*Ayecah?*” as the first gospel promise. This is the promise of redemption.

**How are the following verses the same as Genesis 3:9? John 3:16, 17; Romans 8:3; Galatians**

**4:4; 1 John 4:10. What principle do we see in these verses? How have you experienced this principle in your own life?**

THURSDAY—DECEMBER 30

### GOD’S HELP THROUGH THE GOSPEL (Genesis 3:15).

As soon as Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they recognized their terrible mistake. A chill took over their souls. They knew something had died within them. Their beautiful robes of light and glory disappeared (Genesis 3:7). These robes showed their unity with God. Their joy for God’s daily visit with them was gone (Genesis 3:8).

**How did Adam and Eve try to cover their naked condition? Genesis 3:7. What lesson does this show us about our trying to fix the results of sin? Isaiah 64:6; Romans 10:3, 4. How do we see this same lesson in Cain’s offering? (Genesis 4:3).**



“All of the good things we do are like [the same as] polluted rags to you [God]” (Isaiah 64:6, NIV).

The fall of Adam and Eve did not surprise God. As soon as they fell and admitted their sin to God, God gave them great hope (Genesis 3:12-15).

**How did Genesis 3:15 give Adam and Eve hope? (Read also Romans 16:20; Ephesians 6:11; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20:10.)**

God did not try to question the serpent (snake) or to get him to say he had done wrong (Genesis 3:14). God simply condemned<sup>6</sup> the serpent. In Genesis 3:15, God offered Adam and Eve the promise of hope. This promise showed the end of sin and Satan. The glory of God's everlasting<sup>7</sup> gospel was shown in the judgment setting of Genesis 3:14-19. In this judgment setting, God clearly showed the mysteries of His will (desire) and the wonders of His grace.

**How would you answer someone who thinks God was too rough on Adam and Eve? After all, they just ate a piece of fruit.**

## FRIDAY—DECEMBER 31

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Read Joshua 24:15; Job 1:6-12; Job 38:4-7; Rev-

elation 22:17; and Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 33–43.

“God let Satan go forward with his rebellion. God knew that Satan’s plans needed to be fully developed so all the universe could see how evil his plans really were. . . .

“It was necessary to show all the angels of heaven, and all the other worlds, that God’s government is holy and His law is perfect. Satan made it appear that he wanted what was good for the universe. So the universe needed to understand Satan’s true character. God gave Satan time to show how wicked he really was. . . .

“If God had quickly destroyed Satan, the universe would have served God from fear rather than from love. . . . For the good of the entire universe throughout time, God let Satan develop his government. In this way, the universe would see the true nature of Satan’s charges against God’s government. The universe would see God’s justice (fairness) and mercy<sup>8</sup> and the unchanging (never changing) goodness of His law.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 41, 42.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Think carefully and prayerfully about the last three sentences in the quote above. What do these

<sup>6</sup>condemned—found guilty.

<sup>7</sup>everlasting—lasting forever; without beginning or end.

<sup>8</sup>mercy—kindness we do not deserve.

words tell us about God's character?

2. Compare Genesis 3:15 with Revelation 12:17. What message

do these verses have for us?

3. What lessons are there for us in the fact that sin could arise in such a perfect situation as heaven?