

**Bible Study Research Notes**

# **Does the Bible Teach the ‘fall of man’ Doctrine?**

**And did God create human nature?**

**By Craig M. White  
Version 1.2**





## ***Does the Bible Teach the 'fall of man' Doctrine?***

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Our purpose and desire are to foster Biblical, historical and related studies that strengthen the Church of God's message & mission and provides further support to its traditional doctrinal positions.

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### Associated Readings

- "Are People Lost Because of Adam's Sin?", *Plain Truth*, January 1984 by Herbert W. Armstrong.
- "The Private Conference With Mao That Might Have Taken Place," *Plain Truth*, March 1977 by Herbert W. Armstrong.
- *Mystery of the Ages* by Herbert W. Armstrong.

## **Executive Summary**

The document investigates whether the Bible explicitly teaches the traditional Christian doctrine of the "fall of man" - the concept that the sin of Adam and Eve resulted in a significant decline of humanity from its original pure state to one of inherent sinfulness with death and corruption affecting all.

The author concludes that the Bible does not endorse a "fall of man" doctrine in the manner commonly interpreted in later Western Christianity (particularly post-Augustine Catholicism and Protestantism). The term "fall of man" is not found in Scripture and likely derives from sources outside the Bible, such as Greek philosophical thought. Genesis 3 recounts the disobedience of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Eden, which resulted in mortality and the introduction of sin into the world (e.g., Romans 5:12), but does not imply a "fall" from perfection, nor the transmission of personal guilt to all descendants.

Denominational Perspectives are summarised concerning traditional Protestant and Catholic views, as well as those of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Church of God (Seventh Day), and the Worldwide Church of God (under Herbert W. Armstrong).

The latter rejected the conventional "fall" doctrine from the early 1950s onward:

- Adam and Eve were created neutral with free moral agency and the ability to choose between good and evil, rather than perfect with an immortal soul that would have gone to heaven, but now can go to hell.
- Their sin was a misguided choice influenced by Satan, not a "fall" from a superior state.
- Human nature is shaped by the influence of Satan's broadcasts (self-centeredness, vanity, hostility towards God), rather than being passed down from Adam or being a direct creation of evil by God.
- The genuine "fall" refers to Satan's rebellion (Lucifer), which introduced sinfulness to mankind.

The paper further examines Pagan/Greek influences and posits that the doctrine of the fall has its origins in paganism, predating Christianity. Ideas regarding humanity's "fall" can be found in the works of Hesiod, Zoroastrianism, and various other myths. In particular, Empedocles (c. 494–434 BC) presented a story of a "fall" that involved a separation from divinity, the descent of the soul, and the necessity for purification - concepts that impacted some early Church Fathers (such as Origen, Jerome, and Tertullian's references to Empedocles teachings) and later Christian interpretations of original sin or the fall.

The author aligns with the later position of the Worldwide Church of God: humanity was created with the potential for character development through free will, rather than existing in a state from which it significantly "fell." The expulsion from Eden marked the beginning of Satan's temporary dominion over humanity (6,000 years), yet God's plan has always encompassed redemption through Christ to develop Divine character, rather than merely remedying the damage from an alleged fall.

*Does the Bible Teach the 'fall of man' Doctrine?*

This work serves an educational and apologetic purpose within Church of God traditions, referencing publications from the Armstrong era and contrasting them with mainstream Christian beliefs. It includes historical Worldwide Church of God articles that illustrate the evolution of doctrine on this subject.

“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.” (Genesis 3:22-24, ESV)  
“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” (Romans 5:12, ESV)

## Introductory Remarks

This is not a technical paper or large Bible study on the subject of man’s original sin and expulsion from the Garden of Eden and consequent 6,000 years of mankind’s subjection to Satan’s rule.

Rather, it is about whether there was a ‘fall’ of Adam and Eve from a higher state of perfection having been surprised by Satan’s temptation; or whether they were neutral, still learning to be obedient to God with the Creator having full knowledge that there would be an ultimate test of their faith (to the extent that they had progressed).

Ask yourself the question: “how does this impact me, personally?”

As a result of Adam and Eve’s sin, for 6,000 years they would be subject to Satan until the coming of the Messiah to reign for 1,000 years. It is likely that this 6,000-year period commenced from the time of expulsion (not the time of their creation) until the commencement of His reign.

As we shall see, the phrase "fall of man" and the full doctrine (particularly as interpreted in later Christianity) do not appear in the Bible per se. Instead, it stems from interpretations of Genesis 1–3, with the term itself likely originating from sources outside of the Bible. Nowhere does the Bible describe a "fall" doctrine with inherited guilt or total depravity. I found that some scholars argue the doctrine as commonly understood is a later development and not derived from Scripture.

There are a number of sources which discuss or explain that today’s “fall of man” doctrine is not found in the Bible, viz:

"The phrase *fall of man* does not appear in Jewish scripture. According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, the term probably originates from the Book of Wisdom, a Greek work generally dated to the mid-first century BC, or to the reign of Caligula (AD 37–41)." ("Fall of Man", *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall\\_of\\_man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_man) )

You can find the *Easton's Bible Dictionary* entry online

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/fall-of-man.html>

Another is:

"Many evangelical theologians deny that Genesis 3 teaches the doctrine of the Fall of man and argue that it is not original to the text but is something that has been read into it." (Simon Turpin, "“In Adam's Fall We Sinned All”: Does Genesis 3 Teach the Fall of Man?” *Answers in Genesis*, 17 May 2017).

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* agrees with this:

"The story of the fall of man is never appealed to in the Old Testament either as a historical event or as supporting a theological construction of the nature and origin of sin." (Isidore Singer (ed), "Fall of Man", *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901–1906), Volume V, pp. 599–600).

From this we can see that some researchers and theologians and various groups are not in agreement with the mainstream view concerning this concept and many do not believe that man “fell” as such.

NB: this article (like many others) has been a long time coming. I cannot recall when I first commenced work on it, but the last time I did some writing on this important subject was 2006 under the title *True Origin of the 'Fall of Man' Doctrine*. So here I am 20 years later, finally getting around to completing it. There are many more articles in a folder awaiting completion some day.

## Relevant Scriptures

Scriptures we can link to Romans 5:12 (regarding Adam's sin leading to death for all humanity) include 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 (death in Adam, life in Christ), Romans 3:23-24 (all have sinned), John 3:16 (God's love and eternal life), and verses in James 1:14-15 (wrong desire leading to sin and death) and Romans 6:22-23 (wages of sin is death, gift of God is eternal life). But none of them describe a “fall”.

These are and other relevant Scriptures that tie in with this concept are below (ESV):

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”  
(Romans 5:12)

“For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

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For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

"For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor." (1 Timothy 2:13-14)

"For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2-3)

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 3:23-24)

"But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." (James 1:14-15)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:22-23)

What the above shows us is that humanity's core issue originated with Adam's transgression in the Garden of Eden via Eve, who, in turn, was influenced by Satan. This decision brought sin and death upon the entire human race - every individual is impacted because "in Adam all die". Each person commits sin and falls short of God's glory, thereby incurring death as the penalty for sin.

However, God offers a wonderful Plan and solution in Jesus Christ, the "second Adam." Just as Adam's actions resulted in condemnation and death for all, Christ's obedient life, sacrificial death, and resurrection provide justification, sanctification and then glorification (via resurrection and eternal life) to all who have faith and obey Him, living a life that develops holy, righteous character – attributes like God's. Salvation is a gracious gift from the Father received through Christ - it cannot be earned - reversing the curse of sin and granting eternal life in place of death. This summarises God's Plan, but it is more fully revealed when we understand that the seven Holy Days picture the seven stages in the Plan. Christ, at the behest of the Father, guides the Plan to completion.

## Church of God Position on the “fall” of man

It is difficult to trace the doctrinal position of Sabbatarians on this extending back centuries. However, I do have one in my collection dating to 1774 - *Articles of Faith of the Church of Christ* (later known as Sabbatarian Baptists and eventually Seventh Day Baptists):

"4th. We believe **all mankind, in Adam, fell** from the estate of perfection in which God made man, and by that fall, Adam brought himself and all his posterity into a state of condemnation." (quoted in *A History of Seventh Day Baptists in West Virginia* by Corlis Randolph, pp. 20-21). [emphasis mine]

This demonstrates that their doctrine was similar to that of surrounding Protestants at that time.

### Andrew Dugger Articles and Writings

Andrew N. Dugger (1886-1975) was probably the most prominent leader in the Church of God (Seventh Day), serving as editor of *Bible Advocate* and influencing its doctrines before leaving in 1933 to help raise up another Church of God group based in Salem, West Virginia. His writings emphasise the fall of Adam leading to total human depravity with no indication of original neutrality.

Given his prominence, it is important to find any aspect of this doctrine he may have held to.

His *The Bible Home Instructor* includes covers similar themes on original sin, with references to several of the same Scriptures that are used by Christianity in general (e.g., Genesis 6:5, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:3-5).

In the *40 Points of Doctrine* booklet (1960s):

"16. Man was created perfect, but **through disobedience fell**, bringing imperfection, death, and God's wrath upon mankind - Genesis 3; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22." (p. 3) [emphasis mine]

This indicates that he, and the Church of God at that time, subscribed to the commonly held doctrinal view on the subject.

### Church of God (Seventh Day) Articles and Statements

The Church of God (Seventh Day) primarily discusses these doctrines in their official *Statement of Faith* and in articles from their publication, *Bible Advocate*. Their teachings emphasise that humanity was created sinless (good) in God's image but became sinners by nature through Adam's fall. There is no explicit discussion of human nature being "neutral" at creation; it is described as originally good and then corrupted.

The concept is probably discussed in pre-1960s periodicals, but it is terribly time-consuming to extract all of that information at this time. In *their What the Church of God Believes, and Why* (1917) the actual term "fall of man" is not used, but the idea is there.

In 1949 the Church published *What the Church of God Believes; and Why* (Church of God, Seventh Day):

**"The Fall of Man**

6. Man was created a perfect being, but through disobedience fell, bringing imperfection, death, and God's curse upon all mankind. Gen 1:26-31; 3:8-20; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22; Romans 5:12.

**The Plan of Salvation**

7. The Plan of Salvation was made by God the Father as the way of escape for man from the results of the fall. In this plan God gave His Son, Jesus, who paid the penalty for mankind, and made possible our salvation and redemption to eternal life. 2 Peter 3:9; 2 Thess. 2-13; John 3:16; 10:1,7; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:11; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 2:24; 1 John 2:2-4; Heb. 9:13, 14; 9:28." (p. 10)

From their 2018 *Statement of Faith Church of God (Seventh Day)*, "3. Man, Satan, Sin, and Death":

"Humanity was created in the image of God as sinless, but not naturally immortal. Sin entered the world when Adam and Eve yielded to the temptation of God's adversary, Satan. The Devil, capable of transforming himself into an angel of light to deceive and destroy humanity, will finally be destroyed in the lake of fire. As a result of **Adam's fall**, all humanity became sinners by nature and by choice. The result is spiritual separation from God, physical death in an unconscious state, and eternal death for those who do not receive salvation in Christ." (<https://publications.cog7.org/tracts-books/tracts/the-church/statement-faith-church-god-seventh-day>) [emphasis mine]

And similarly:

"As a result of **Adam's fall**, all humanity became sinners by nature and by choice. The result is spiritual separation from God, physical death in an unconscious state, and, ultimately, eternal death for those who do not receive the salvation offered by Christ." ("Statement of Faith 3. Man, Satan, Sin, and Death", *Bible Advocate*, March-April 2018, p. 4). [emphasis mine]

"The Church of God (Seventh Day) shares this belief in the total depravity of humanity. Article 3 of our Statement of Faith states, As a result of Adam's fall, all humanity became sinners by nature and by choice. The result is spiritual separation from God, physical death . . . , and eternal

death. . . ." (Israel Steinmetz, "Talking Tulip", *Bible Advocate*, January-February 2018, p. 25).

The following implies human nature post "fall" possessed a tendency toward evil. But it is not clear if human nature was neutral or originally both good and bad:

"The Bible teaches that **we were born with the tendency toward evil** — the sin nature... What we call human nature is the same as sin nature, or 'flesh,' in the Bible... Everyone has this nature, in different shapes and sizes." (Calvin Burrell, "Are Humans Really Born in Sin?", *BAOnline*, 6 December 2009).

If by "tendency" he means that one is born with free moral agency, then one would agree. But if he means that both good and evil were inputted, one would disagree. It appears that he is positioning to the former.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) doctrinal position seems to have remained constant over the decades, but whether there were likely variations to this stance by various ministers and members per the norm.

## **Worldwide Church of God Doctrine**

### **Basic Teaching**

The Worldwide Church of God rejected the traditional doctrine of the "fall of man" as a corruption of human nature from perfection to inherent sinfulness. But that was not always the case and it changed its views by the early 1950s from what was inherited from the Church of God (Seventh Day). From that time forward, Herbert Armstrong taught that Adam's sin was a wrong choice (rejecting God's government), but it did not cause a "fall" in human nature - humans were never "perfect" (nor immortal) to begin with. The real "fall" was Satan's (Lucifer's rebellion), which brought chaos to the pre-Adamic earth. No "original sin" or "inherited guilt" exists; sin is personal transgression, and humans are born neutral but with a potential to acquire carnal, human nature which must be overcome via God's Spirit. This is reiterated across his writings.

However, originally Mr Armstrong believed that man did fall. Notice the following from a 1928 article by him:

"Sir Oliver Lodge says, 'Taught by science, we learn that there has been no **fall of man**; there has been only rise.' Another frank evolutionist, Carl Vogt says, "Evolution turns the Creator out of doors.""

"According to evolution, there could have been no Adam - no clearly-defined first man. Therefore there could have been NO FALL OF MAN! The Devil is not content with destroying- the proof of God, the Father. He must go farther. The only FALL OF MAN has been UPWARD--- ever upward! The first human beings were mere ape-men,-almost as much ape as man..."

Now note where this leads us. Since man is not **fallen**, but has ever continued to progress upward, MAN NEVER HAD ANY NEED OF A SAVIOUR! Thus does evolution dispose of the great purpose-- the great proof--of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, - the second member of the Trinity." ("Can a Sabbath-Keeper Believe in Evolution?", *The Bible Advocate* (Vol. LXII, No. 18, pp. 274, 275).

The entire article is devoted to critiquing evolutionary theory for denying the Biblical fall of man. It argues that evolution, by its very essence, holds to an "upward" progression of humanity with no original fall into sin, which contradicts Genesis and Sabbath teachings. The article affirms the traditional view held by the Church of God and Christendom of a downward fall through Adam's sin.

From this we can see that Herbert Armstrong's original belief matched that of the Church of God (Seventh Day), which in turn was similar to that of mainstream Christianity on this point.

Later he changed his position by the early 1950s that man did not fall. Further information on this in **Appendix. First Known Worldwide Church of God Article on the Subject.**

### **Key References**

Since that time, probably the most complete items published by the Worldwide Church of God on the subject by Herbert W Armstrong were:

- "Human Nature. Did God Create It?", *Good News*, June 1976, pp. 2-5, 22-25 (published in booklet form the same year).
- "Are People Lost Because of Adam's Sin?", *Plain Truth*, January 1984, pp. 1, 28-30.

In the former article he argued that God did not create humans with an inherently evil nature. Adam and Eve were formed with a neutral mindset which was capable of choosing good or evil but *not* predisposed toward sin from birth. This "clean slate" state meant their initial nature was neither good nor evil but open to influence. Evil entered through Satan's deception in the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve chose to acquire a sinful attitude (selfishness, hostility, rebellion – the way of GET instead of the way of GIVE and outgoing concern for others) from him. This form of "human nature" is thus described as Satan's nature imposed on humanity, not something God "inputted" or designed into people at creation. Mr Armstrong emphasised that this evil inclination is spiritual influence broadcast by Satan, affecting all descendants of Adam. However, we are born with inclinations, strengths and weaknesses – which we have to contend and work with.

He goes on to explain that all blame for the world's evils (violence, war, immorality etc) falls on this acquired human nature, influenced by Satan, rather than on God. God created humans "very good" (Genesis 1:31), but free will allowed for the choice that led to sin. So, Mr Armstrong rejected the idea that God is the author of moral evil.

In the latter article (1984) he wrote:

*Does the Bible Teach the 'fall of man' Doctrine?*

““Why is it," some people will ask, "that this whole world has to suffer so much now, because of Adam's sin?"

There's a common belief that as a result of the original so-called "fall of man"- meaning the transgression of Adam- that all people are born lost- consigned straight to an everburning torment of hell fire!

But is that true?

Let's look at this ancient event that is called the fall of man! We take a lot of things for granted- we unquestioningly assume much of what has been generally accepted and believed. But when we take out some of these things and take a good look at them, we receive some shocking surprises!" ...

**And so in the commonly accepted idea of Christianity redemption is an effort on the part of God to repair the damage that Satan inflicted in that original sin- to make us as good as Adam was, before the so-called "fall."**

But is a badly wrecked automobile really as good, after it is repaired, as it was before the wreck? Of course not!

This common idea of a professing Christianity is not true at all! It is not the teaching of the holy Bible. It is not the Christianity of Christ, nor the 12 apostles, nor of the apostle Paul!

The general false conception is that ever since the so-called fall of Adam, God has been doing his very best to get the whole world saved- that is, to restore men to a condition as good as Adam was before the so-called fall! And, further, that there is a great competition going on between God and Satan. Satan is very cunningly resisting God, restraining and outsmarting him so that only a small fraction of the whole world's population is actually being saved." (p. 1)

"The "fall" of man wasn't what you have been supposing. Satan was never more powerful than God-he never frustrated God's purpose, and he never will." (p. 29)

"Now when the first man and woman yielded to those appetites and desires-that God had originally created in them-and transgressed God's law, committing the first sin, then what happened? **Did they then fall from immortality and become mortal all of a sudden? That is ridiculous!**" (p. 29) [emphasis mine]

This stance is iterated in a number of articles that appeared in *the Plain Truth, Good News, God Speaks Out on the New Morality* and his book *The Mystery of the Ages*.

One quote from a Worldwide Church of God booklet encapsulates the concept well:

"Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9) **about the so-called "fall of man" account** in Genesis 3. Sex had nothing to do with the disobedience ("fall") of Adam. And Satan was the one who fell (Luke 10:18). Adam and Eve only followed Satan. The "Fall of man" idea is thoroughly pagan, having come through Greek philosophy. Around 450 B.C., Empedocles put forth the doctrine of man's "fall" that later figured

prominently in the writings of the "Church fathers." (*Is Sex Sin?* pp. 14-15) [emphasis mine]

We shall have a deeper look at this Empedocles further into the paper.

## **Traditional Christian Teachings on the 'fall of man'**

Some are of the view that God either created evil within human nature or enticed men into sin. They look at Scriptures such as the story of Job:

“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.

And the LORD said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.”

And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, **although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.**”

Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life.

But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.”

And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.” (Job 2:1-6, ESV)

This is the most debated phrase. God acknowledges that Satan provoked or stirred Him to allow Job's suffering ("incited" or "moved" in older translations like KJV). The suffering was "without cause," meaning Job did nothing to deserve it- no hidden sin or fault prompted the calamities. Commentators note this shows God's sovereignty: He permits trials but sets limits, and Satan's accusations prove baseless. It underscores that not all suffering results from personal sin.

*Pulpit Commentary* online provides insights:

“Although thou movedst me against him (see Job 1:9-11), to destroy him; literally, to **swallow him up**; **i.e.** to ruin him, overwhelm him with calamities. Without cause; **i.e.** "when he had done nothing to deserve such treatment." Job 2:3”

From this, one can understand why some believe God leads people into sin. Yet the Word explicitly states:

“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.” (James 1:13-15)

Barnes Notes on the Bible online states:

“Although thou movedst me - The word rendered "movedst" מוּטוּ sũth means to incite, to impel, to urge, to irritate against anyone; Joshua 15:18; Judges 1:14; 2 Chronicles 18:2; 1 Samuel 26:19; Jeremiah 43:3. The Septuagint renders this in a special manner, "And thou hast ordered (εἶπας eipas) his property to be destroyed in vain" (διακενήζ diakenēs), that is, without accomplishing the purpose intended.

To destroy him - The word used here (from בלע bela') means properly to swallow, to devour, with the idea of eagerness or greediness. It is then used in the sense of to consume, or destroy; compare Job 20:18; Proverbs 1:12; Numbers 16:30; Psalm 69:15. In the margin it is rendered "swallow him up."

This was not an attempt to lure Job into sin; but testing him to the nth degree.

There is much discussion in theological circles about Job such as Jean-Pierre Fortin, “Lament of a Wounded Priest: The Spiritual Journey of Job”, *Religions*, Vol. 9, No. 12, 15 December 2018. And Martin Shields, “Malevolent or Mysterious? God’s Character in the Prologue of Job”, *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (2010), pp. 255–70.<sup>1</sup>

### **It Was Not Taught by Early Christianity**

Early Christianity (pre-Augustine, roughly 1st–4th centuries) did not universally teach the "fall" as a doctrine of inherited guilt. Some early church ‘Fathers’ viewed Genesis 3 as partly allegorical or symbolic, not historical. The full doctrine emerged later, influenced by Augustine (354–430 AD), with original sin not prominent until then. Irenaeus and Tertullian saw it as historical, but Clement and Origen treated it as allegory.

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<sup>1</sup> There are many insights to the story that scholars find, such as: “This analysis of חָנַם in 1:9 and 2:3 shows not only the same meaning in each instance, but in a way the two verses represent mirror images of each other. Whereas in 1:9 the Adversary cites what God has given Job as evidence that his piety is not חָנַם, in 2:3 God and the Adversary lament that their experiment is חָנַם because of what Job has not given them. This comparison of the two verses reveals how thoroughly the situation has reversed: the Adversary who was sure that God’s material investment had yielded a return in Job now expresses frustration that his speculative venture has failed to yield any results. This linkage continues in the two subsequent verses—1:10 and 2:4—in which the Adversary uses identical language to describe the two transactions. In both verses, which are quoted above, the Adversary uses the preposition בְּעַד to indicate the interest at stake and the same relative clause (כֹּל רְצֹנִי לִי-א) to denote one’s entire possessions. Besides highlighting again the prevalence of economic language in these verses, these linguistic similarities show how closely connected are the two instances of חָנַם in the opening prose narrative of the book of Job. Understanding both instances as meaning “without benefit” not only makes sense in the context of their respective verses but also honors the integral role these two verses play together in the literary design of the narrative.” (Toc Linafelt & Andrew Davis, “Translating חָנַם in Job 1:9 and 2:3: On the Relationship between Job’s Piety and His Interiority”, *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (2013), pp. 627-639).

“No matter which way we go with Paul, **there are good reasons why Augustine should not be held up as his definitive interpreter—especially as it relates to Adam and the Fall.** For starters, Augustine’s interpretation is partly based on a bad translation of Romans. Augustine read the Bible from the Latin Vulgate, and in it Romans 5:12 reads, “All die because *in Adam all sinned*”. The original Greek is more accurately rendered, “death spread to all because *all have sinned.*” Augustine claimed that all humans inherit a flaw from Adam which is propagated through the human reproductive system, and furthermore that all humans inherit Adam’s guilt. Even if the mistranslation is ignored, this is still quite an expansion of Paul’s claims. Fergusson quotes New Testament scholar Luke Timothy Johnson, who says, “Paul is simply stating that everyone has sinned the way Adam did, so the effect of Adam’s sin continues, and continues to be symbolized by the death experienced by all humans” (p. 40). (Jim Stump, “Evolution and the Fall”, *BioLogos*, 4 November 2015). [emphasis mine]<sup>2</sup>

Margaret Barker's work, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (pp. 45-47) investigates how the traditions of the ancient Jerusalem Temple influenced the development of early Christian theology and worship. She claims that early Christianity has preserved aspects of First Temple (pre-exilic) Judaism. In her temple framework, Adam is depicted as the original high priest in Eden, which is considered a prototype of the temple, along with the consequences of his transgression. Barker regards later Christian beliefs concerning this “fall” as innovations that emerged later.

### **Key Protestant and Catholic Statements on the Fall of Man**

Catholicism affirms the fall as historical, with Adam's sin (original sin) wounding human nature and transmitting a fallen state (not personal guilt) to all via propagation, inclining to sin. Redemption requires Christ's grace.

One can read the Catholic position, in the *Council of Trent, Fifth Session* (17 June, 1546): Decree Concerning Original Sin (Norman Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, pp. 665–67); *Council of Trent, Sixth Session* (13 January, 1547): Decree on Justification (Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, pp. 671–74); and *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Part One, Section Two, Chapter One, Article 1, Paragraph 7: "The Fall" (pp. 385-421).

Protestants believe in the historical fall corrupting all humanity (original sin, total depravity), with nature transmitted through Adam.

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<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, many theologians - for a very long time – have not viewed Adam and Eve (and much or Genesis) as literal. For example, Karl Barth in *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. IV, Part 1, pp. 508-09 describes the Genesis creation/fall narratives as "saga" - meaning what theologians term “a form of pre-scientific, poetic-historical witness that conveys theological truth without being strictly historiographical.” “Among the early Church writers, Clement considers the narrative of the Fall partly as fact and partly as allegory (Strom. 5:11, pages 689, 90), and, following Philo, makes the serpent the image of voluptuousness. Origen regards the account as allegorical (De princ. 4:16; contra Cels. 4:40; comp. also Origen, Fragm. in Gen. ad loc.).” (John McClintock and James Strong, "Fall of Man" *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*)

*Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646/47 AD) adopted by Presbyterians and Reformists:

“Chapter 6: Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof

1. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.
2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.”

*Augsburg Confession* (1530 AD; Lutheran):

“Article 2: Of Original Sin

Also they teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.”

*Belgic Confession* (1561 AD; Reformed)

“Article 14: The Creation and Fall of Man and his Incapability of Doing What is Truly Good.”

In all these positions, man (which includes his immortal soul) has fallen.

## **Eastern Orthodox Teaching on the Fall of Man**

The Eastern Orthodox Church teaches that the "Fall of Man" refers to Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-7), which introduced sin, death, and corruption into the world. This event is described not as "original sin" (a Western term) but as "ancestral sin" emphasising the inheritance of consequences rather than personal guilt. Adam and Eve were created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27) with potential for deification or divinisation (*theosis*) - union with God but neither fully immortal nor mortal initially. Infants are born innocent and sinless, without guilt, though subject to mortality and the world's corruption. This doctrine is based on their early Church Fathers (e.g., Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa) and rejects Augustinian influences referred to above.<sup>3</sup>

### **Key Eastern Orthodox Statements**

The *Catechism of St. Philaret of Moscow* (Longer Catechism, 1823/1830) continues the belief in ancestral sin from Adam as the transmission of death and corruption, not guilt:

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<sup>3</sup> Various references to this can be found in sources such as: Kallistos Ware (1993), *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 222–25; John Meyendorff (1979), *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, pp. 143–46; John Romanides (2002), *The Ancestral Sin*, pp. 35–40; Thomas Hopko (1981), *The Orthodox Faith: Doctrine*. Vol. 1, pp. 133–35.

"As all mankind, during the state of innocence, was in Adam; so in him all men, falling from what he fell, remained in a state of sin... We are conceived in our mother's womb, and born in this sin" (Question 165; full text in Rev. R.W. Blackmore, *The Doctrine of the Russian Church, Being a Summary of Christian Theology in the Russian Orthodox Church*, pp. 124-25).

*An Orthodox Catechism* (compiled by the Orthodox Church of Geneva, based on traditional sources; St. Michael's Orthodox Church, Geneva):

"The consequences of the Fall spread to the whole of the human race... Human nature itself has 'fallen ill with sin'... A leaven of evil passions' and of 'secret impurity and the abiding darkness of passions'" (Sections 23-25, quoting St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Macarius of Egypt).

### **How It Differs from Catholics and Protestants**

Eastern Orthodoxy's view emphasises a sort of healing from sin because sin is regarded as a spiritual disease compared to sin as type of legal debt.

The Catholic Church's International Theological Commission published *The Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die Without Being Baptized* (2007) where they compare their views to that of the Eastern Orthodox including the doctrine of limbo and acknowledges the Orthodox denial of guilt for infants.

In the document, the Eastern Orthodox viewpoint is traced to the Greek Fathers and Eastern tradition; the legacy from Adam is chiefly one of corruption, mortality, and an inclination towards sin ("ancestral sin" vs "original sin"). Sin itself is regarded as a personal, voluntary action and as such, no one carries or inherits Adam's personal guilt. Infants enter a fallen, mortal existence but are not personally culpable. There is no notion of total depravity; the Divine image in humanity remains marred yet intact, maintaining free will.

The Catholic position in relation to original sin, entails the inheritance of a condition of deprivation accompanied by the tendency to sin and mortality. It encompasses a type of inherited "guilt". Limbo was regarded as a state of natural happiness but devoid of dwelling in heaven with God (and free from suffering in hell).

As we have seen, the majority of Protestant denominations (especially Reformed/Calvinist) uphold the notion of original sin as comprising both inherited corruption and guilt through Adam's which results in total depravity (the inability to choose good in relation to God without the regeneration).

Many years ago, I stumbled upon a reference from 1929 where a Church of God's view was contrasted with that of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

## *Does the Bible Teach the 'fall of man' Doctrine?*

### “DIFFERENCES ON THE FALL

Q. How do the Churches differ respecting the Dogma of the fall of man?

A.

a) The Orthodox, Anglican, and Papal Churches accept that the nature of man has suffered from sin, i.e. the image of God in him has been corrupted and the "in His likeness" has not been attained, and all men are responsible before God for the original sin.

b) The Protestant Churches accept that the nature of man, i.e. that "in His image", was lost wholly, and replaced with a nature wholly corrupt and ethically dead.

**b1) But some of them, as the so-called Church of God, do not accept that all men are responsible before God for the original sin.**

c) The Christian Scientists accept that:

1. Man is not simply a material form with a soul inside, but a reflection of the infinite, the true idea, the true image and likeness of God.

2. Man did not fall, because it is impossible to fall for an idea of God, apparently never born and never dying.” (p. 20)

### “THE TRUTH AS TO THE FALL

Q. Which Church is right in its teaching on the Dogma of the fall?

A. The Orthodox, the Anglican, and Papal Churches, whereas others are in error because:

1. If all men are not responsible for the original sin, why does St. Paul write? "In whom all sinned," (Book of Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 12) and that before we became Christians, "we were children of wrath, even as others", (Book of Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verse 3). Therefore, how otherwise did we sin than by heredity, by reason of the sin of our First Parents, and how could we be under the wrath of God if the sin of our First Parents did not rest heavily upon us?

2. If the image of God was wholly destroyed, why does the Holy Scripture say, "Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God I made man", (Genesis, Chapter 9, Verse 6). And this is said concerning man not before the fall but after it.

3. The soul does not die, as is shown above; but the death to which the Holy Scripture refers, is moral death, as appears from the words of the Apostle Paul, "She who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." (I Timothy, Chapter 5, Verse 6).

4. For man to be considered as the reflection of the infinite, a kind of God, contradicts reality which presents man as being finite in all respects.

5. If man did not fall, then who is in error?

a) The Holy Scripture which declares that man has fallen?

b) Christ, who assures us that, "the Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many" (Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 20, Verse 28)?" (p. 21)

c) or the Christian Scientists?

It seems obvious that (c) the Christian Scientists are in error.” (Rev. Conostas H. Demetry, D. D., *Catechism of the Eastern Orthodox Church*).<sup>4</sup> [emphasis mine]

It is difficult to ascertain whether this refers to the Church of God (Seventh Day) or to a Pentecostal 'Holiness' church, with the name Church of God. If the former, it is of interest that such a small group was recognised back in 1929.

## Pagan Influences

### It Was Taught Prior to Christianity

Concepts resembling the "fall of man" (descent from innocence into sin or suffering) appear in pre-Christian traditions outside Judaism, such as Zoroastrianism, Persian myths, and Gnosticism. These include myths of humanity's fall due to ambition or temptation, often without the inherited guilt aspect. Zoroastrianism depicts humankind created to resist degradation and decay through good deeds, but not living up to this standard, implying a fallen state. The narrative has parallels in Mesopotamian and Egyptian myths.<sup>5</sup>

Another is Hesiod, an ancient Greek poet active around the 8th century BC, outlined his concept of humanity's decline, often interpreted as a "fall of man" - in his poem *Works and Days*. This myth does not describe a single "fall" like the Biblical story of Adam and Eve, but rather a series of creations and destructions by the gods, emphasising moral decay, and separation from the divine. Hesiod framed this as humanity fallen from grace with no return to the Golden Age possible without divine intervention.

Apparently there is no *direct* adoption of Hesiod's myth into Christian doctrine, but Church Fathers like Justin Martyr (2nd century AD) and Origen (3rd century AD) read the Greek myths arguing that they foreshadowed Christian revelations. The influences therefore cannot be denied.

As Christianity spread in the Roman Empire, converts integrated Greek philosophy and myth. Hesiod was part of the curriculum, influencing how early Christians viewed original sin. However, Christians rejected Hesiod's polytheism. (see Lines 105ff in *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*, translated by Glenn W. Most).

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<sup>4</sup> He also mentions the Church of God in relation to the Eucharist:  
“DIFFERENCES AS TO THE NUMBER OF SACRAMENTS

Q. How do the Churches differ as to the number of Sacraments?

A. The Orthodox and Papal Churches accept seven (7) Sacraments, but the Protestant Churches accept two (2): Baptism and the Eucharist, except a few who accept them as simple types or remembrances without divine Grace, and especially **the so-called Church of God, which accepts: Baptism, the Eucharist, and Foot-washing, but only as ceremonies, without Divine Grace.**” [emphasis mine] It is difficult to determine from this which particular Church of God group he refers to.

<sup>5</sup> References for this include: Steven Rummelsburg, "Did the Fall of Man Really Occur?", *Strange Notions*, 2 September 2015; Madry Boyce, (1979). *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, pp. 16–18; "Fall of Man", *Britannica* (published 26 December 2025); Andrew George (1999), *The Epic of Gilgamesh*; Isidore Singer (ed) "Fall of Man", *JewishEncyclopedia.com, Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901–1906), Volume V, p. 599; James Robinson (1978), *The Nag Hammadi Library*, pp. 152–160.

Paganism entered Christianity early on and continued its influences until it was unrecognisable from the original true religion or Way as espoused by Christ Himself and the original Apostles,

### **Influence of Empedocles**

It must have been late 1973 or in 1974 that I read the following statement in a Worldwide Church of God publication:

“Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9) about the so-called "fall of man" account in Genesis 3. Sex had nothing to do with the disobedience ("fall") of Adam. And Satan was the one who fell (Luke 10:18). Adam and Eve only followed Satan. The "Fall of man" idea is thoroughly pagan, having come through Greek philosophy. Around 450 B.C., **Empedocles put forth the doctrine of man's "fall" that later figured prominently in the writings of the "Church fathers."** (*Is Sex Sin?* pp. 14-15) [emphasis mine]

This intrigued me and over the years I set out to find further information.

Empedocles (c. 494–434 BC), a Greek philosopher, is known for his doctrines of reincarnation (transmigration of souls). He taught the "fall" motif - exile from divinity, descent into the material world, and the need for purification - has been compared by some scholars to later Christian ideas of humanity's fall, original sin, or the soul's pre-existence and descent. They argued that doctrines such as the immortality of the soul, original sin, or the "fall of man" were corrupted by Hellenistic ideas rather than Biblical.

Early Church Fathers (such as Jerome, Origen, and others) were familiar with Empedocles' ideas, often critiquing or referencing Pythagorean reincarnation doctrines (which Empedocles drew from and expanded). For example: Jerome in *Against Jovinianus* explicitly mentions Empedocles alongside Pythagoras. Here are the sources that mention this – though not always in agreement with him, they were influenced by him:

- Origen (c. 184–253 AD) - *Contra Celsum*, Book I, Chapter 32; *Contra Celsum*, Book VII, Chapter 41; *Contra Celsum*, Book VIII, Chapter 53.
- Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170–235 AD) - *Refutation of All Heresies*, Book I, Chapter 3 (or 24 in some editions).
- Tertullian (c. 155–220 AD) - *A Treatise on the Soul*, Chapter 3.
- Lactantius (c. 250–325 AD) - *Divine Institutes*, Book III, Chapter 18.
- Jerome (c. 347–420 AD) - *Chronicle* (Chronicon); and Letter 84 (To Pammachius and Oceanus), Section 6; and *Against Jovinianus*, Book II (Adversus Jovinianum), Section 6.

It seems that the *Is Sex Sin?* booklet was correct – Empedocles indirectly influenced later Christian ideas of humanity's "fall" from purity, original sin, and the need for redemption - though Empedocles' version is more cyclical.

## Final Comments

The Worldwide Church of God first began teaching the notion that man did not “fall” per se until the early 1950s from what can currently be ascertained. However, around the same time the false belief that God somehow inputted both good and evil into man entered the Church – it is unclear what generated this thinking, but it *may* have been influenced by Jewish philosophy.<sup>6</sup>

Frankly, when I first read this idea concerning human nature in the early 1970s, it did not sit well with me at all. This idea was contained in old reprint articles and also referenced in some books and booklets critical of the Worldwide Church of God’s teaching on this and other doctrines. It felt very wrong and unsettling. I later learned that this was changed (I think during a ministerial visit in early 1974) but I cannot, at this time, pinpoint exactly when it was changed but it would seem to fit into the period when church governance reforms were being undertaken in the late 1960s or early 1970s.

However, the core idea that God placed into man the capacity to do good or bad; obey the Creator or sin; choose between making right and wrong decisions - was correct from the start.

By this method, man develops character. But only because he makes choices as a free, moral agent. Forcing man to do good means that he does not develop character but is more of an automaton. Inputting both good and evil into human nature so that under the influence of Satan it is inevitable that he sins, is also false. Man was created neutral.

As such, the Church was correct in teaching from the early 1950s that man did not “fall” from a higher position or goodness. Later, it changed the notion of human nature to one that Adam and Eve were created neutral - with the capacity to choose between God’s Way or Satan’s – this change was now in alignment with the Scriptures and God’s way.

Rather, it was Lucifer who fell (Isaiah 14:12; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:7-9) and became Satan the Devil. He wants us to think that humanity fell so as to hide aspects of God’s Plan from us.

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<sup>6</sup> During my research I discovered that non-Biblical Jewish texts address God's creation of both the good inclination (*yetzer tov*) and the evil inclination (*yetzer hara*) within humanity in the midrashic work known as *Bereshit Rabbah* (or *Genesis Rabbah*):

"Rabbi Naḥman bar Shmuel bar Naḥman said in the name of Rav Shmuel bar Naḥman: 'Behold it was very good' – this refers to the good inclination; 'and behold it was very good' – this pertains to the evil inclination." (Rabbi Naḥman bar Shmuel bar Naḥman, referencing Rav Shmuel bar Naḥman (rabbi from the 3rd-4th century AD), *Bereshit Rabbah*. Section 9, p. 7). [www.sefaria.org/Bereshit\\_Rabbah.9.7?lang=bi](http://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit_Rabbah.9.7?lang=bi).

This passage interprets the Biblical expression "very good" from Genesis which can include the concept that even the evil inclination can fulfill a constructive role when properly directed.

Another is in the *Babylonian Talmud* (*Talmud Bavli*) which asserts that God created the evil inclination (*yetzer hara*) as an aspect of human nature, meaning that the good inclination (*yetzer tov*) serves as its counterpart. But with the study of the Torah, the evil inclination is controlled. Refer to Section: Tractate Kiddushin 30b. <https://www.sefaria.org/Kiddushin.30b?lang=bi>.

One video worth watching about ‘Satan’ and human nature as understood by Judaism is *The Satan of Judaism is Very Different*, J-TV, 30 January 2025.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnXpebOtbHc&list=PLW18c6Ks8cBsl\\_7O4K2GjLfjEm\\_26rBJp&index=10](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnXpebOtbHc&list=PLW18c6Ks8cBsl_7O4K2GjLfjEm_26rBJp&index=10)

A very good summary of all of this may be found in the Beyond Today magazine:

**“God did not create man with an evil nature. In Ecclesiastes 7, where Solomon is lamenting the sinfulness of people, he makes this comment: “God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes”—or inventive ways to be bad (verse 29).**

**This did not mean that Adam and Eve had godly righteous character when they were formed in the Garden of Eden. Rather, they were in a state of innocence—having as yet made no moral choice against an alternative way.** God decreed their creation “very good” (Genesis 1:31). But righteous character was to come through right choices yet to be made. God had made them to be initially responsive to Him and to get along with each other. So they started in the right way. They had certain physical needs and desires that were being met, so there was as yet no temptation toward selfishness.

But then came direct temptation from Satan the devil as the serpent in the garden. Eve succumbed to deception and the enticement to disobey God’s command. Adam wasn’t deceived but he also ate the forbidden fruit (1 Timothy 2:14). In partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man effectively chose to determine good and evil for himself, submitting to Satan’s influence and rule. Here was the beginning of the nature of man being corrupted. But the corruption did not stop with them.

As noted earlier, many have taught the idea that all people are now tainted with “original sin” through descent from Adam and Eve—born condemned in sin. Quoted in evidence is Romans 5:12: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—” Why did death spread to all? Not because of Adam’s sin but “*because all sinned*” (same verse)—and in different ways from Adam (verse 14). It was not from being tainted with Adam’s sin.

God says people are only condemned for their own sins, not those of their forefathers (Ezekiel 18:20). It’s true that consequences of sins are passed down generationally (Exodus 20:5; Numbers 14:18), but that’s because of life patterns, teachings and altered circumstances being passed on and having long-term effects.

There were major consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin for their descendants to follow. These included being largely cut off from God and living in a cursed world subject to the malignant influence of Satan and his demons.” (Don Hooser and Tom Robinson, “Human Nature. What You Need to Know!”, *Beyond Today*, May-June 2024, p. 10) [emphasis mine. Refer to the Appendix. *Beyond Today Bible Commentary. Ecclesiastes 7:16-29.* for additional information from this source]

*Does the Bible Teach the 'fall of man' Doctrine?*

Finally, God knew very well that Satan was lying in wait to draw away Adam and Eve – it was no surprise to Him. He had devised a Plan in 7 stages portrayed by the Holy Days with the sacrifice of Christ and His resurrection at the commencement and most of mankind accepting God's offer of salvation at the end of His Plan (I Peter 1:20; Ephesians 1:4, 11; 2 Timothy 1:9; Matthew 25:34; Hebrews 4:3, Luke 11:50; Matthew 13:35; Revelation 13:8; 17:8).

Now, isn't that a superior and clearer understanding and portrayal of God's character and desire for mankind than the confusing gobble-gook talk of theologians?

## **Appendix. First Known Worldwide Church of God Article on the Subject**

**“I Hold GOD Responsible!” *Good News*, January 1952, pp. 3-4.**

By Herman L Hoeh

**Millions are born into this unhappy world without their own knowledge or consent. Through ignorance and poverty and corrupt civilization millions exist in fear, suffering, starvation and frustration! WHY?**

Adam "fell"!

Most of his children ever since have lived in superstition, squalor and disease, ignorance and the fear of poverty and war.

Why?

The devil is the cause; he wrecked everything for God" — say the churches. "He thwarted the purpose of God in making Adam perfect."

But how do the churches know? Did they get their answer from the Bible?

“We certainly did," they say. "Didn't God have to let men kill His son Jesus so we could be restored to what Adam lost?"

### **Were Gods Plans Wrecked?**

Let's look at the Garden of Eden again. Did the devil under the guise of a serpent sneak in, after God had laid all His plans so well, and then wreck everything with the "fall"?.

Did Satan really frustrate Gods purpose by deceiving the woman?

If that be true, then the churches make Satan more powerful than God for the moment. Cleverly, Satan had been able to alter God's will.

"God, think fast!"

And He did, the churches say. "Look, in the struggle for supremacy He was able to think out the plan of redemption to restore His authority." Now He had the best of Satan. Then what?

The Creator waited too long to start repairing the damage, it would seem — and Satan has been able to be just one long stride ahead of God in keeping the world lost. Christ's death just isn't repairing the damage except for a few. The world is still lost in sin!

That's the kind of picture the Churches are painting of God! In their gospels they put Him in a gigantic controversy with Satan, and lo and behold — Satan is winning the contest! Ignorance, poverty and war are the proofs that God hasn't saved the world.

What a muddle! But then, where did you read such a story in your Bible?

### **What's the Truth?**

The truth is, Satan did not wreck the purpose of God!

The Creator knew from the beginning, and planned to have it so — that the devil should deceive man into sinning. **God did not design the plan of salvation to repair the damage and restore mankind to the perfection Adam "lost."**

God purposed the plan of redemption before the "fall!" Adam was not created with perfect character in the first place, or he couldn't have sinned.

Adam was created so that he could sin! Why?

### **The Reason for Sin**

Because Satan is not more powerful than God and he could not frustrate the plans of God, we must conclude that GOD IS RESPONSIBLE for what happened in Eden!

"Oh, no!" shriek the churches. "God couldn't be guilty of SIN!"

Who said God was guilty? I said God is responsible.

**Responsibility is not guilt. God did not force Adam to sin. Adam did not have to sin — for God permitted him — yes, urged him — to take of the tree of life. But God put human nature in Adam so he would want to sin** [NB: this view was changed years later to be that He put into man a nature that could sin, based upon choice] **unless he resisted the pull of his nature.** Adam became guilty of disobeying a command. God was responsible for placing a nature and a mind in Adam and Eve so they by themselves weren't able to resist the temptation of the devil whom God deliberately permitted to enter the Garden.

WHY?

"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope (Rom. 8:20)." Yes, HOPE!

The Bible says God is responsible for making man the kind of creature he is — capable of sinning. God knew, therefore, that man would suffer, live in sorrow, poverty and war. God planned that these things should be, and that man should be guilty of bringing these miseries upon himself and his children! Why?

Because of a HOPE — a PURPOSE — God had in placing man upon the earth! And the present chaos is the way God intended that His plan should be perfected.

God placed in man, not according to man's wish, but according to God's purpose, a nature that would cause him to sin. [NB: this view was changed years later to be that He put into man a nature that could sin, based upon choice] If He is responsible for that, then He must rectify it — He must save man from it! God's responsibility compels Him to deliver man from the bondage of sin in which he has gotten himself from ignorance and yielding to the temptations of the flesh.

That is the why of the plan of redemption. Not to restore man from the damage the devil did, but to perfect the hope God had from the beginning. And what is that hope? What is God's PURPOSE? The creation of God's own character in us! God is reproducing Himself!

But why should there have been need of our guilt?

"That no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor 1:29). And again:

"For by grace (an unmerited free gift) are ye saved (from guilt) through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Here in Ephesians 2:9 we see it reiterated that God planned that sins of the flesh and the proud wisdom of men (1 Cor. 1:26-30) should not be pardoned by our human works, but by God, lest we boast.

### **God's Workmanship**

But why does God carry out his purpose so we have no chance to boast? Let's read right on: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:11)."

"We are HIS WORKMANSHIP created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Now we see — God is making us His workmanship, not according to our works but according to His works to which we yield to permit Him to perfect in us. GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF!

We human mortals were made subject to temptation and vanity so we would LEARN BY EXPERIENCE IN SUFFERING AND POVERTY that the way contrary to the law and character of God is not good — that we should repent of breaking God's law — that we should want to live by the faith of Christ through the Holy Spirit so we can fulfill that law by love and good works.

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us (Rom. 5:5)." "Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10)." The Law of God expresses the Character of God. God is a SPIRIT. The Holy Spirit is God's Law in action.

By having the love of God in us that fulfills the law, we become God's workmanship preparing us for the HOPE He had when He put Adam in Eden.

### **What Is That Hope?**

God is moulding in a few whom He calls today the very character — divine love, wisdom, patience, faith — of God Himself. But the vast majority of Adam's children have been going their own way, never hearing of the PURPOSE of God, and consequently reaping untold suffering because of ignorance. And God purposed that these suffering mortals should not in this age have the knowledge of His purpose. It is according to God's plan, because He blinded the nations that He might have, in the future, mercy on all.

Satan has deceived the nations according to the permission and plan of God!

But why is God calling out a few from the world today — for us who know the truth, this is our only day of salvation — while leaving the other people in darkness?

Because God is fulfilling in us through His workmanship, the hope He has for all the sons of Adam. And that hope is given in Romans 8:21: "Because the creature (man) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

We are to be made the Sons of God (I John 3:1,2), brought into the family of God (Eph. 3:15), given the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) — made like God so we can be the Persons in the Kingdom or family of God ruling with Him. We shall be God, as the Father and the Son are God now, for God is Spirit dwelling in the Persons of the Father, the Son and us. No wonder God won't let us boast! If we earned anything we would become proud with the powers of God and DESTROY the universe by abuse of those powers.

Adam was not made a perfect character in the beginning — not at all — but he and his children were made to become perfect by inheriting the divine nature so we could fill the office of Gods sons. He and all his children have been permitted by God, according to God's great Wisdom, to suffer from sin for six thousand years. And then comes the great day of SALVATION!

### **Great Day of Salvation!**

God will send His Son the second time to "destroy... the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over — all the nations. ... We have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his SALVATION." That is in your Bible, read it: Isaiah 25:7-10.

The God who blinded men and made them unable to deliver themselves from the suffering and consequences of sin — the God who concludes all in unbelief that He might

have mercy upon all (Rom. 11:32) — even He shall remove the veil of blindness that hangs over all people so they shall come to the knowledge of the truth at last.

God is a responsible Person! He is trustworthy! That's why He must bring all to a knowledge of salvation from sin and death. God could not be just otherwise.

But why should God have chosen to make us His sons — to raise us to the Godhead — by the path of human travail and woe? Is it worth it, will you ask?

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18)."

Not worth it, you say?

Not worth having the power, the might and the Character of God? Not worth immortality and eternity and the inheritance of this earth as an everlasting possession?

It is just because some of you would say it isn't worth it, that God has permitted you to suffer, so you would come to appreciate the great love He gives in inviting — calling — you to become his Sons. So you would realize the AWE FULL responsibilities that go with being co-CREATORS with God!

One in God's OFFICE can't afford to make any mistakes. That is why you have had to suffer the consequences of ignorance — to learn by bitter pain and sorrow the dire results of any other way than the way, the character of God. And the way of God is love, the fulfilling of the LAW!

God purposed that you and all the sons of Adam should disobey that perfect law of liberty (Jam. 2:12) so you would know what it means to break it. [NB: as above, that view was changed some years late] By suffering sin, we learn obedience to the Father as did Jesus (Heb. 5:9). We will be carrying out His will, not our own, for we shall have learned that His way is right.

The mighty wisdom of God in placing us in this environment! That we come to know with all our heart — by suffering — the weighty responsibility of being God and governing the creation in LOVE.

[emphasis mine]

## Appendix. Did God Create Human Nature?

Some taught in the Worldwide Church of God that God created evil human nature and this must be crushed in kids. Or that we should despise ourselves (rather than the old nature).

This idea that God put negativity into Adam and Eve's nature upon creation seems to have first been taught in the early 1950s (per the Herman L Hoeh article "I Hold GOD Responsible!" *Good News*, January 1952, pp. 3-4).

Herbert Armstrong reversed this by the late 1960s. Later he produced a booklet on the subject with a much more accurate understanding: *Human Nature. Did God Create it?*

Here are pertinent extracts from the article:

"Absolutely NO REBELLION is indicated here [when Adam was created]. We find, instead, the response that Adam gave names to all cattle, to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.

"This incident reveals Adam's attitude and nature as he was created, PRIOR TO his temptation by Satan (which is recorded in chapter 3). Notice carefully. Absolutely NOTHING in the account of this pre-temptation incident indicates in Adam the presence of an evil, hostile, rebellious attitude or nature. It does not reflect a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, as human nature is described (Jeremiah 17:9), nor a carnal mind that is enmity (hostile) against God and which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

"Nor, on the other hand, does it reveal a nature filled with the Spirit of God. Adam had not yet been confronted by Satan, had not disobeyed, nor had he taken of the "tree of life" to receive the indwelling LOVE and POWER of God's Holy Spirit, which would have imparted the DIVINE NATURE (II Peter 1:4).

"So prior to the temptation by Satan, we have only the revelation that Adam's NATURE, as God created him, was not evil, hostile and diabolical. There may have been the physical and mental nature of self-preservation and such things. But NOT the evil nature of SELF-centeredness." (pp. 3-4)

"We humans start out at birth all right. But soon we begin to absorb and ACQUIRE the selfish, self-centered attitude broadcast by Satan. But Satan's kingdom of angels — now turned to demons — rejected the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, and it was thus removed from earth.

"GOD'S PURPOSE in having created and put HUMANS on earth was to develop in them GOD'S own holy and righteous character. God wants a people who will REJECT and overcome Satan's WAY OF LIFE and turn to THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD — which is GOD'S WAY of life." (p. 20)

But the old teaching was:

"Responsibility is not guilt. God did not force Adam to sin. Adam did not have to sin — for

God permitted him — yes, urged him — to take of the tree of life. But **God put human nature in Adam so he would want to sin unless he resisted the pull of his nature...** **“God placed in man, not according to man's wish, but according to God's purpose, a nature that would cause him to sin.** If He is responsible for that, then He must rectify it — He must save man from it!...

**“God purposed that you and all the sons of Adam should disobey** that perfect law of liberty (Jam. 2:12) so you would know what it means to break it. [NB: as above, that view was changed some years late] By suffering sin, we learn obedience to the Father as did Jesus (Heb. 5:9).” (Herman L Hoeh article “I Hold GOD Responsible!” *Good News*, January 1952, pp. 3-4).

“Human nature is not instinct. Animals have instinct-humans have human nature. Animal instinct is virtually involuntary action, based not on reasoning, imagination, decision and will, but on instinct.

**“Human nature is a tendency of attitude—a sort of gravitational pull of attitude in the direction of VANITY.** The human mind, once aware of this pull, has power of reasoning, of understanding, of decision, and of will to resist it- power to see, comprehend, decide, and what one ought to do, instead of what he wants to do...

“A basic ingredient of human nature, then, is REBELLION-against all authority over one. And since all authority emanates from, or at least is allowed by God, this attitude of rebellion is actually rebellion against GOD.” (Herbert W Armstrong, “How the Plain Truth is Different”, *Plain Truth*, May 1961, p. 2) [emphasis mine]

And

**“GOD HAS SET IN MOTION A LAW WITHIN THE HUMAN MIND WHICH CAUSES IT BY NATURE TO BE HOSTILE AND DISOBEDIENT to God’s commands. This law is a living, MOVING thing - just like the law of GRAVITY!**

**This LAW operates to pull man down into disobedience as surely as gravity operates to pull an object to this earth.** Man’s mind, having this natural downward pull toward disobedience, is called the “carnal mind.” It is said to be at ENMITY TO GOD-for it is by nature disobedient to God (Rom. 8:7).

PAUL RECOGNIZED THIS LAW WORKING WITHIN HIS OWN MIND. Because he was drawn downward into disobedience so often, he cried out in shame, “I find then a law [of disobedience], that, when I would do good, evil is present with me . . .” (Rom. 7:21 ). And Paul went on to lament, “I see . . . [this same] law [of disobedience] in my members [in my body], WARRING AGAINST the LAW OF my MIND [GOD’S LAW, WHICH PAUL HAD ACCEPTED IN HIS HEART AND MIND (verse 22)] and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin [disobedience] which is in my members” (verse 23). THUS, there is a WAR CONSTANTLY GOING ON WITHIN MAN’S MIND as to whether to be obedient or disobedient to God. EVEN THE RIGHTEOUS PAUL WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY in keeping temptations from getting the better of him!” (*Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 21, “This Present Evil World”, 1959, p. 1)

**“Do you know that GOD HAS ITEMIZED THE DISOBEDIENT PULLS THAT HE HAS PUT WITHIN OUR MINDS?** The pulls to which the vast majority of this world succumb at this time, thus making of it “This Present Evil World?”” (p. 3)

**“Wasn’t it God, Himself, who put within man the disobedient pull (which must be crushed out through the power of 9 the Holy Spirit) -to murder-war-kill? Mark 7:21”** (p. 6. This is mentioned several times in the lesson).  
[emphasis mine]

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The above view was changed years later to be that He put into man a nature that *could* sin – not *would* sin, based upon choice. God had no desire that man would sin – but knew that under the influence of Satan, he probably would.

## **Appendix. Beyond Today Bible Commentary. Ecclesiastes 7:16-29**

The below is extracted from the said Commentary.

“Solomon then declares in the next verse, Ecclesiastes 7:29, regarding both men and women, “Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes”—the last word here, also rendered “devices,” referring to invented ways to do wrong. The word for “man” here, as at the end of chapter 6, is *adam*, or actually *ha-adam*, “the man”—a word used in a plural sense in Ecclesiastes 7:2, so that the reference here goes back to man’s original creation in the Garden of Eden and probably means not just Adam himself but the whole human race beginning with him. Made in the image of God with no sin, the first man was initially upright—morally innocent and doing as God said. While he had not developed righteous character, as there was as yet no testing of resolve, the scripture here shows that he was not neutral in terms of morality, as God had made him to do right and reinforced that by instruction. Adam naturally obeyed at first—as did Eve. But when a test of that morality came, with stark temptation to disobey God, they sinned. Man’s nature became corrupted under the influence of Satan—and all mankind since has gone astray, with people devising ever more ways to do evil. Solomon will even note in Ecclesiastes 9:3 that human hearts are “*full of evil.*” Thankfully, God is in the process of recreating the human race through “the last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45)—Jesus Christ. Through Him we can become and remain upright.”

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