

From Position of Honor to Dishonor



SABBATH—APRIL 2

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16, 17; Ezekiel 28:12–19; Deuteronomy 8:1–18; Isaiah 14:12–14; 2 Corinthians 11:14.

MEMORY VERSE: “Your conduct [actions] was without blame from the day you were created. But soon you began to sin” (Ezekiel 28:15, NlrV).

TODAY'S MEMORY VERSE HAS TO BE ONE OF THE DEEPEST VERSES IN THE WHOLE BIBLE. Two important words stand out: *perfect*¹ and *iniquity*,² (read KJV). This verse shows that while heaven is perfect, iniquity (sin) still happened in heaven.

What this verse also shows is that, in God's universe, the concept (idea) of “perfect” includes freedom. This kind of freedom is moral freedom. Moral freedom means the ability to choose between right and wrong. This freedom to choose makes us human. Machines or software do not have this freedom. For example, a company might be able to program (create) software that blocks (prevents) workers from looking at pornography³ or from gambling on the Internet. But no one would call the software itself “moral” or “free.”

Lucifer⁴ was so highly honored in heaven that even his garments (clothes) are mentioned in the Bible. Lucifer's name means “covering cherub [angel].” But Lucifer abuses the freedom given to him and falls away from the Lord.

What can we learn from Lucifer's terrible mistake?

1. perfect—without blame or defect (weakness).

2. iniquity—sin, wickedness.

3. pornography—movies, pictures, magazines, and so on that show or describe naked people or sex in a very open and direct way in order to cause sexual excitement.

4. Lucifer—the name that Satan had before he was thrown out of heaven.

SUNDAY—APRIL 3**THE CREATOR OF ALL THAT HAS BEEN MADE (John 1:1–3)**

Our God is the Creator. John 1:1–3 makes it clear that anything that was created was created only through the action of the Lord.

Someone once asked the question, “Why is there something instead of nothing?” It is perhaps the most basic of all questions that could ever be asked. How does John 1:1–3 answer this question?

This idea is interesting too. There is a theory⁵ known as the Big Bang theory. It teaches that our universe, instead of being eternal, really came to life billions of years ago. Whether the theory is true or false, many have seen it as proof for a God and a Creator. This is because a lot of physics⁶ and a lot of math equations (formulas, plans) were needed for the Big Bang to have ever happened. And, as one scientist asked, “Who breathed fire into the equations?”

Scientists now think there are large parts of the universe that we cannot see. These parts are filled with what is called dark matter and dark energy. This tells us that we have very limited knowledge of what is really out there in the universe.

According to Colossians 1:16, 17,

5. theory—an idea or set of ideas that is intended to explain facts or events; a theory is suggested or presented as possibly true but is not known or proven to be true.

6. physics—a science that deals with matter and energy and the way they act on each other in heat, light, electricity, and sound.

what else and *who* else has God created that we cannot see every day? How does this show us how little we know? How does this teach us to be humble?

Notice, too, that these things were created by God. They also were created “for Him.” What might that mean? How can we understand that? What should it mean for us to know that we, too, were created “for Him”?

MONDAY—APRIL 4**A BEAUTIFUL AND PERFECT ANGEL (Ezekiel 28:12–19)**

One of the groups created by God was the angels. Chief among the angels was Lucifer. Lucifer’s downfall is described in Ezekiel 28, using the king of Tyre as a symbol of Lucifer.

How does Ezekiel 28:12–19 describe Lucifer? What kind of covering did Lucifer have? What can we learn from that?

Isaiah describes Lucifer as the “son of the morning.” Isaiah 14:12 shows how God pictured Lucifer in his perfect condition. In Ezekiel 28:12, God also described Lucifer as “the model of perfection.” The word *sum* (KJV) could be translated as “pattern” or “model.”

Lucifer was also described as the

“day star” or “shining star” (Isaiah 14:12, Amplified and NLT). In Hebrew, *hithel* (shining one) was used to describe the planet Venus when it shone as brilliantly as the morning star.

Imagine yourself wearing a garment (robe), or covering, made perhaps of rubies, diamonds, topaz (yellow jewel), beryl (green, yellow, or pink stone), onyx (black and white stone), jasper (green stone), sapphire, emerald, chrysolite (yellowish-green stone), and turquoise (blue-green stone) framed with gold. We might try to imagine the colors of Lucifer’s covering (robe) (red, yellow, green, azure blue [color of the clear blue sky], turquoise, olive green). As the leader of all angels, Lucifer, was robed in great glory. And with the highest position among them, Lucifer must have had the respect and love of all the other angels.



Lucifer, the leader of all angels, was robed in great glory.

The angels wanted to follow orders. They showed the beauty of

their Creator and praised Him for the honor of living in a peaceful heavenly home. Their endless praise for their God inspired unselfish love for one another. For as long as they wanted, they lived in a peaceful, beautiful, and loving place.

Peace, unity, perfection, and love reigned (ruled) everywhere in this heavenly home. As humans we cannot fully understand or imagine this picture.

How could we copy the peace and love of heaven in our homes, workplaces, and churches? Discuss how our lives on earth could better show our God’s glory and His love.

TUESDAY—APRIL 5

THE FALL OF A PERFECT ANGEL (Ezekiel 28:17)

It might be hard for us to imagine it. But Lucifer must have been very wonderful to look at. Look at the description of Lucifer again in Ezekiel 28: wise, beautiful, dressed in all these royal jewels. He must have been something!

If we read Ezekiel 28:13 carefully, we notice an interesting point. After talking about all these beautiful and costly jewels that were his covering, the verse says, “ ‘ “on the day you were created, they [jewels and robes] were prepared” ’ ” (NirV). Lucifer’s coverings, his garments (clothes), showed his high position. As we will

learn throughout this quarter, garments can show a great deal about our work and position. If his garments hinted at anything, it was that Lucifer was an honored angel, one with a lot of power.

According to Ezekiel 28:17, what helped bring about Lucifer’s downfall? What should we learn from this?

True, Lucifer’s coverings were wonderful. And he was very beautiful and wise. But where did it all come from? Of course, whatever Lucifer wore came only from God. Again, we are dealing with a created angel. His covering, his beauty, and his wisdom were all gifts from God. Without the Lord, Lucifer would have had nothing and been nothing.

But the angel who lived closest to God forgot that important truth.



Lucifer forgot that all his beauty and power were gifts from God.

What principle (rule) is found in Deuteronomy 8:1–18 that shows what happened to Lucifer?

How easy it is for us to forget just how much we need the Lord for everything. What daily and useful things can we do to help us to keep from falling into the trap of looking at our “beautiful garments”—our wisdom, our successes, and our wealth and forgetting just how much we need the Lord for it all?

WEDNESDAY—APRIL 6

WANTING TO BE GOD (Ezekiel 28:14)

Ezekiel describes Lucifer on the mountain of God in Ezekiel 28:14. His words show the high position that God gave to Lucifer.

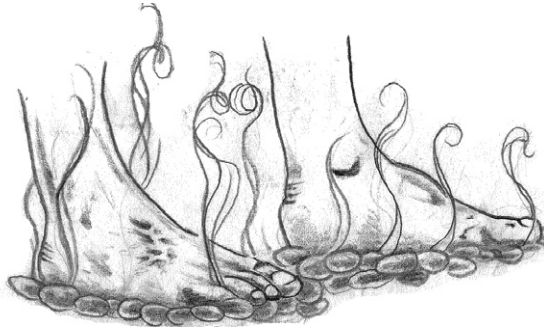
Other examples in the Bible show that a mountain experience had great meaning. For example, Moses climbed a mountain to meet God (Exodus 19:20). Jesus and three of the disciples met on a high mountain where Jesus experienced the Transfiguration⁷ (Matthew 17:1, 2).

“Thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire” (Ezekiel 28:14, KJV). Again, Ezekiel uses a symbol to show God’s presence: “stones of fire.” The Lord appeared to Moses, Aaron, and the other leaders in this way: “They saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a street made out of sapphire

7. the Transfiguration—the event in which Jesus’ body was glorified or filled with glory. Read Matthew 17:1–5.

[blue jewel]. It was as clear as the sky itself" (Exodus 24:10, NIV).

Lucifer was honored by God and the other angels. But he let the wrong thoughts enter and grow in his mind. Those wrong thoughts led to wrong actions and to his rebellion and ruin.



Ezekiel said that Lucifer walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, meaning he stood in God's presence.

Isaiah 14:12–14 also describes Lucifer's fall. What can we learn from these verses to help us to overcome in the struggle with sin?

The Romans of long ago often believed that when an emperor died, he became a god. This explains Emperor Vespasian's dying words, "Oh, my, I think I'm [I am] becoming a god."

The temptation to play God is more common than most of us think. Suppose we judge people's reasons. Suppose we take power or control that does not belong to us. Or suppose we try to control others in ways that are not proper. Then are we not trying to play God?

Think more about the "hidden" ways in which we all might be in danger of trying to play God. How have you done the same things? What is the only cure for this dangerous temptation?

THURSDAY—APRIL 7

SATAN ON EARTH (2 Corinthians 11:14)

As we all know so well, Satan's fall upset both heaven and earth. His fall and rebellion in heaven are carried over to earth through "the great controversy (war)" between Christ and Satan. It is real, it is bitter, and all of us are in it.



Satan's fall upset both heaven and earth.

What is Revelation 12:7–12 talking about? And what warning—and at the same time, hope—do these verses give us?

Fortunately, because of the Cross and because of what Jesus did for us there, we know how the great controversy (war) between Christ and Satan will end. Victory is safe for all who are covered in the robes of Christ's perfection. But Satan works very hard to keep as many as possible from accepting salvation and eternal life.

Pay close attention to the meaning in 2 Corinthians 11:14. What important message should we learn from this verse for ourselves?

Satan works in different ways to deceive (trick) us and to turn us from a saving relationship with Christ. And he is using people who are Christians in name only to do just that. Often this may be his best and most successful method.

Spiritual danger is all around us (1 Peter 5:8). The important thing for all of us to remember is that we are dealing with a defeated enemy. The devil has lost. His ruin is sure. His rule will end. But we cannot fight him and win by ourselves. Our only hope and strength are found in Jesus, who has defeated him already. Jesus' victory is ours, as long as we claim it for ourselves in faith and obedience.

What are the “hidden” ways in

which the devil can, step by step, destroy our faith if we are not careful? What day-by-day choices can we make to be sure that Satan fails?

FRIDAY—APRIL 8

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “Why Was Sin Permitted?” pages 35–43, “The Tabernacle⁸ and Its Services,” page 349, in *Patriarchs [Forefathers] and Prophets [Special Messengers]*; “The Light of Life,” page 464, in *The Desire of Ages*. Read also *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 4, pages 675, 676.

“Satan tries to cover the people of God with blackness, and ruin them. But Christ steps in to save us. God's people have sinned, but Christ has taken the guilt of their sins upon His own soul.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 169.

“Sin entered the world by the downfall of one who stood at the head of the holy angels. What caused so great a change? A royal, honored subject changed into a law-breaker? The answer is given, ‘You thought you were so handsome that it made your heart proud. You thought you were so glorious that it spoiled your wisdom’ (Ezekiel 28:17, NIV). The Lord made the covering cherub [Lucifer] so beautiful and gave him special honor. God had given him the gift of beauty and power and honor so perfect that there was no excuse for Satan's rebelling

8. tabernacle—place of worship.

against God.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 2, 1897.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ Think more about the idea of morality (doing right) and freedom. Can there be true morality without freedom? Are actions that seem to be “moral” really moral if they are forced, if they do not come from free choice? Discuss.

❷ No matter how much Satan had, it was not enough. In what ways do we find ourselves showing that same attitude (thought or feeling)? How can we stop ourselves from going down this same path?

❸ Discuss Revelation 12:7–12 in class. How are we to live our lives,

especially in light of verse 11, NIV: “They [God’s people] overcame him [Satan] because the Lamb [Christ] gave his life’s blood for them. They overcame him [Satan] by giving witness about Jesus to others. They were willing to risk their lives, even if it led to death.”

❹ Think more about the idea of how we try to “play” (act like) or be God. What does it mean? How might this thought be shown in our lives without our even knowing it?

❺ Read again the first Ellen G. White quote above, about Christ accepting our guilt upon Himself. What does that mean? What hope can we learn from that promise? What will happen to those who refuse to believe that this promise is for them too?