

GEN-07
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To Eve God said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16). The pain of childbirth and the subjection of a wife to her husband are direct results of the Fall.

To Adam God said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (3:17-19).

Then man was put out of the garden. "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever'-

therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken" (3:22-23).

PARADISE LOST

When Adam sinned, the earth was corrupted and he immediately lost his kingdom and his crown.

Because all mankind fell in Adam, because he lost his kingdom and his crown, we do not now see the earth subject to man. The earth originally was subject to man, and it supplied all his needs without his having to do anything. He had only to accept and enjoy the earth as it provided for him. Then, tempted by Satan, man sinned, and his tempter usurped the crown. There you see the change in the chain of command. Man fell to the bottom, and the earth, under the evil one, now rules man. If you pay much attention to ecology, you know that we do not rule this world; it rules us. With all our modern technology, we must constantly fight against the earth for our survival.

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

What else happened to Adam after he had sinned? First, there was murder within his own family. Then there was polygamy. In the next few chapters of Genesis we read of death. By the time we come to chapter 6, God is sending a flood to destroy all mankind but one family. Man indeed had lost his crown. The prince of the earth, of the system of the world, now is Satan. "The whole world lies in the power of

the evil one" (1 John 5:19). He rules the cursed earth, which in turn rules sinful man. When man lost his crown, he also lost mastery of himself as well as of the earth. He was totally sinful and became a slave to sin.

Not only that, but the animal kingdom was now subservient to man only out of fear, no longer out of affection. Much of the animal kingdom was no longer able to be tamed at all. The ground originally produced good things naturally and abundantly for man to have for the taking. Now it produces thorns, weeds, and other harmful things naturally and abundantly. Whatever good things man now gets from the earth come only by tiresome effort. Extremes of heat and cold, poisonous plants and reptiles, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, disease, war—all these were released upon man after the Fall. Virtually everything God had given for man's good and blessing became his enemy, and man has been fighting a losing battle ever since. For millennia, he himself has been dying. Now he is finding out that the earth is dying with him.

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THE GROAN OF CREATION

Amazingly, the earth itself knows its condition. Look again at v. 19-20. "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of

Him who subjected it" (Rom. 8:19-20).

God subjected the earth to this curse in order that man might continually have trouble. Man had to know that God was aware of his sin, and he had to suffer the consequences, in part, by fighting against the very earth that was designed to be his servant. But when the new Kingdom begins, "the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now" (vv. 21-22).

The earth, aware of its curse that came with Adam's fall, is groaning for the day that the sons of God are manifest in the Kingdom, for the earth knows that it, too, will be liberated from corruption.

In the meantime, man is subject to the earth. He plants but he is not sure who will reap. He builds cities and houses and dams and monuments-but they are all subject to destruction by lightning or earthquake or flood or fire or erosion or simply aging. Man lives in jeopardy every hour. Just at the height of professional achievement, his brain may develop a tumor, and he becomes an imbecile. Just at the brink of athletic fame, he may be injured and become a helpless paralytic. He fights himself, he fights his fellowman, and he fights his earth. Every day we read and hear of the distress of nations, of the impossibility of agreement between statesmen in a world that languishes in political and social conflict-not to mention economic hardship, health hazards, and military threats. We hear the whine of pain from dumb

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No wonder the creation groans. But God did not intend it to be this way; and it will continue this way only for a little while, in God's timetable. Someday, in the world to come, when the Kingdom comes, hospitals will be closed, doctors will be out of business, and the ravenous nature of wild animals (and of human beings) will be changed. The crops and the trees will no longer be infested. The game of politics will be over and wars will cease. Man-redeemed man will reign. "And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war" (Isa. 2:4). A day is coming when, in the wonderful plan of God, the dominion that man lost will be given to him again. God's redeemed ones, His children, will never again be subject to death. They will be like the angels (Luke 20:36). In the Kingdom they will, in fact, reign over the angels.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE UNIVERSE?

When Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God's command, not only mankind but also the earth and all the rest of the World was cursed and corrupted. After the Fall, God said to Adam,

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Before the Fall, no weeds or poisonous plants, no thorns or thistles or anything else existed that could cause man misery or harm. But after the Fall, the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it. Ματαιιοτης (futility) carries the idea of being without success, of being unable to achieve a goal or purpose. Because of man's sin, no part of nature now exists as God intended it to be and as it originally was. The verb was subjected indicates by its form that nature did not curse itself but was cursed by something or someone else. Paul goes on to reveal that its Creator executed the curse on nature. God Himself subjected it to futility.

In physics, the law of entropy refers to the constant and irreversible degradation of matter and energy in the universe to increasing disorder. That scientific law clearly contradicts the theory of evolution, which is based on the premise that the natural World is inclined to continual self-improvement. But it is evident even in a simple garden plot that, when it is untended, it deteriorates. Weeds and other undesirable plants will choke out the good ones. The natural bent of the Universe-whether of humans, animals, plants, or the inanimate elements of the earth and heavens-is obviously and demonstrably downward, not upward. It could not be

otherwise while the World remains in slavery to the corruption of sin.

HOW DID ALL THIS HAPPEN?

We need to go back and meet the 1st two humans on Earth. We need to listen to the inspired, accurate and divine recounting of their experience of the perfections of the Garden of Eden.

Throughout the universe, war rages on every front. God, the holy angels, and elect men battle Satan, his demonic hosts, and fallen men. Although the outcome of the war has never been in doubt, the battles are no less real.

What we will see is that the war began on the angelic level when Lucifer, highest of all created beings, rebelled against his Creator. Lucifer, more commonly known as Satan ("adversary"), was cast from Heaven, taking with him one third of the angels (Rev. 12:4). From that moment until the present, war has raged between Satan and God, engulfing angels and men.

On the human front, the battle began when Adam and Eve rebelled against God in Eden. When they sampled the forbidden fruit (At the instigation of Satan) the war of the ages spread to the human realm. Through the centuries since then, men have shaken their fists in defiance at God. And though the folly of fighting Him is self-evident, that does not stop each succeeding generation from trying. They pit their impotence against His omnipotence, shattering themselves like raw eggs thrown against granite.

To understand that titanic, catastrophic fall, try to think with me of life as a perfect human (not life with a perfect human, that is marriage!) and imagine what it was like in the dawn of creation. Your first memory would be waking up in God's garden, Eden. You would remember a comfortable World with no extremes of hot and cold, no storms, no disasters to fear. A secure home with no pestering bugs, no poisonous snakes, no deadly spiders. Just the continual beauty of fragrant and color filled flowering orchids hanging from the verdant green trees. Blooms that never fell off, and never yellowed or wilted. Full, juicy fruit that just hung ripe on the branches but never fell off and rotted.

Even more, you would remember when you had a body that never ached, a digestive system that never rebelled, an eyesight that needed no correction, ears that heard the sweet sounds of life all around. No pains, never a sorrow, not even a fear. No weariness, just peace-filled living. (It almost sounds like an ad for a retirement living in Florida.)

In God's perfect Garden it was paradise living. Everyday was an adventure - new colors, new fragrances, and new symmetry in flowers, butterflies and all the wonders of a perfect animal world. There were no predators, no scavengers, and no carnivores. Just placid and magnificent creatures reflecting the majesty of God. Around every corner of towering and graceful trees each perfectly planted by God - were flocks, herds and gatherings of exquisite living animals.

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sweetness of the sound of the voice of the Lord. About supertime each day a gentle breeze would whisper by and then you would hear the voice of God. The Gardener and Planner of the Universe was walking amongst His creatures in the cool of the day. He was seeking fellowship with you His best friends whom He had made to look just like Him. And your ears that He created would hear the sweetest sound of all, the Voice of Jesus who created them!

This is the World as it was in Genesis 1:31. The perfect, just and holy God of the Universe declared all was good. Then chapter 2 repeats the whole account of Creation from an anthropological (human) view, which fills in the details of man and woman, marriage and the Garden. Chapter 1 was cosmological and how we fit in the universe. So all is good and perfect. Then something terrible happens. Satan rebels and then enters the Paradise of God to ruin (so he thought) God's plan.

So where did the Fall originate. When did God's good creation get bad? For just a moment lets go back to that scene and see what happened. We need to go to Ezekiel 28 first.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SATAN

Satan's original state. Ezekiel 28:12-15 describes Satan prior to his fall. He enjoyed an exalted position in the presence of God; the brilliance of Heaven was his surrounding (28:13). He was called the "anointed ... covering cherub" who enjoyed the position of highest honor before God (28:14, 16). Isaiah refers to this supreme angel

as "star of the morning (KJV Lucifer; NIV morning star), son of the dawn" (14:12). After he became God's chief adversary (Heb. Σαταν) he is never again called by any of these honorable titles. But in his pre-fall splendor he was filled with wisdom and beauty, and he was blameless (Ezek. 28:12, 15).

Satan's fall. Satan's fall is described in both Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. Because of his sin Satan was cast from the presence of God (Ezek. 28:16). The reason for Satan's downfall was his pride; his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and his wisdom became corrupt (28:17). The statement indicates Satan must have had extraordinarily high rank that led to his pride. Isaiah 14:12-14 further describes the sin that led to his downfall. Five "I will's" emphasize his sin (14:13-14). He desired to enter the very presence of God and establish his throne on God's throne above the other angels. He wanted to be like the "Most High." For that reason God thrust him down out of Heaven.

Before his fall, which obviously took place after the creation of the Garden of Eden, Satan was the "anointed cherub who covers" (v. 14). He was the highest ranking angelic being, concerned particularly with the glory of God. He was "on the holy mountain of God," and "walked in the midst of the stones of fire." That speaks of his dwelling in the immediate presence of God. How such a being, blameless since his creation, existing in a perfectly holy environment, could sin remains a mystery. That he did sin is a fact, however. All Ezekiel says of him is that "unrighteousness was found in you" (v. 15). He was then cast from his station among the holy ones in God's presence (v. 16), although he is still

allowed access to that presence (Job 1:6; Rev. 12:10). It was then that he became Satan, the adversary; Apollyon, the destroyer; Devil, the slanderer.

It is difficult for our finite minds to understand how a perfect being in a perfect environment could fall into sin. Ezekiel describes Lucifer's motivation in verse 17: "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor." Satan somehow became enamored with his beauty and splendor, and his response was the sin of pride, which led to rebellion.

Isaiah 14:12-14 confirms that it was indeed pride that caused Satan's downfall:

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

The first sin was pride, and every sin after that has been in some way an extension of pride. Pride led the angel Lucifer to exalt himself above his Creator and Lord. Because the bright "star of the morning" continually said, "I will, I will, I will" in opposition to God's will, he was cast out of heaven (Isa. 14:12-23). Because he said, "I am a god," the Lord cast him "from the mountain of God" (Ezek. 28:11-19). The original sin of Adam and Eve was pride, trusting in their own understanding above God's (Gen. 3:6-7). The writer of Proverbs warns, "When pride comes, then comes dishonor"

(11:2), "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling" (16:18), and again "Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, is sin" (21:4).

Pride is the supreme temptation from Satan, because pride is at the heart of his own evil nature. Consequently, Satan makes sure that the Christian is never entirely free from the temptation of pride. We will always be in a battle with pride until the Lord takes us to be with Himself. Our only protection against pride, and our only source of humility, is a proper view of God. Pride is the sin of competing with God, and humility is the virtue of submitting to His supreme glory.

Pride comes in many forms. We may be tempted to be proud of our abilities, our possessions, our education, our social status, our appearance, our power, and even our biblical knowledge or religious accomplishments. But throughout Scripture the Lord calls His people to humility. "Before honor comes humility" (Prov. 15:33); "The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life" (22:4); "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips" (27:2).

THE KEY TO GOD'S BLESSING: HUMILITY

Humility is an ingredient of all spiritual blessing. Just as every sin has its roots in pride, every virtue has its roots in humility. Humility allows us to see ourselves as we are, because it shows us before God as He is. Just as pride is behind every conflict we have with other people and every problem of fellowship we have with the Lord, so humility is behind every harmonious human relationship, every spiritual

success, and every moment of joyous fellowship with the Lord.

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How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

The first sin was pride, and every sin after that has been in some way an extension of pride. Pride led the angel Lucifer to exalt himself above his Creator and Lord. Because the bright "star of the morning" continually said, "I will, I will, I will" in opposition to God's will, he was cast out of heaven (Isa. 14:12-23). Because he said, "I am a god," the Lord cast him "from the mountain of God" (Ezek. 28:11-19). The

original sin of Adam and Eve was pride, trusting in their own understanding above God's (Gen. 3:6-7). The writer of Proverbs warns, "When pride comes, then comes dishonor" (11:2), "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling" (16:18), and again "Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, is sin" (21:4).

Pride is the supreme temptation from Satan, because pride is at the heart of his own evil nature. Consequently, Satan makes sure that the Christian is never entirely free from the temptation of pride. We will always be in a battle with pride until the Lord takes us to be with Himself. Our only protection against pride, and our only source of humility, is a proper view of God. Pride is the sin of competing with God, and humility is the virtue of submitting to His supreme glory.

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Humility is an ingredient of all spiritual blessing. Just as every sin has its roots in pride, every virtue has its roots in humility. Humility allows us to see ourselves as we are, because it shows us before God as He is. Just as pride is

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Then man was put out of the garden. "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever'-therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken" (3:22-23).

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Amazingly, the earth itself knows its condition. Look again at v. 19-20. "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it" (Rom. 8:19-20).

God subjected the earth to this curse in order that man might continually have trouble. Man had to know that God was aware of his sin, and he had to suffer the consequences, in part, by fighting against the very earth that was designed to be his servant. But when the new Kingdom begins, "the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now" (vv. 21-22).

The earth, aware of its curse that came with Adam's fall, is groaning for the day that the sons of God are manifest in the Kingdom, for the earth knows that it, too, will be liberated from corruption.

In the meantime, man is subject to the earth. He plants but he is not sure who will reap. He builds cities and houses and dams and monuments- but they are all subject to destruction by lightning or earthquake or flood or fire or erosion or simply aging. Man lives in jeopardy every hour. Just at the height of professional achievement, his brain may develop a tumor, and he becomes an imbecile. Just at the brink of athletic fame, he may be injured and become a helpless paralytic. He fights himself, he fights his fellowman, and he fights his earth. Every day we read and hear of the distress of nations, of the impossibility of agreement between statesmen in a world that languishes in political and social conflict-not to mention economic hardship, health hazards, and military threats. We

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When Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God's command, not only mankind but also the earth and all the rest of the World was cursed and corrupted. After the Fall, God said to Adam,

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Before the Fall, no weeds or poisonous plants, no thorns or thistles or anything else existed that could cause man misery or harm. But after the Fall, the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it. *Ματαιότης* (futility) carries the idea of being

without success, of being unable to achieve a goal or purpose. Because of man's sin, no part of nature now exists as God intended it to be and as it originally was. The verb was subjected indicates by its form that nature did not curse itself but was cursed by something or someone else. Paul goes on to reveal that its Creator executed the curse on nature. God Himself subjected it to futility.

In physics, the law of entropy refers to the constant and irreversible degradation of matter and energy in the universe to increasing disorder. That scientific law clearly contradicts the theory of evolution, which is based on the premise that the natural World is inclined to continual self-improvement. But it is evident even in a simple garden plot that, when it is untended, it deteriorates. Weeds and other undesirable plants will choke out the good ones. The natural bent of the Universe-whether of humans, animals, plants, or the inanimate elements of the earth and heavens-is obviously and demonstrably downward, not upward. It could not be otherwise while the World remains in slavery to the corruption of sin.

HOW DID ALL THIS HAPPEN?

We need to go back and meet the 1st two humans on Earth. We need to listen to the inspired, accurate and divine recounting of their experience of the perfections of the Garden of Eden.

Throughout the universe, war rages on every front. God, the holy angels, and elect men battle Satan, his demonic hosts, and fallen men. Although the outcome of the war has never been in doubt, the battles are no less real.

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best friends whom He had made to look just like Him. And your ears that He created would hear the sweetest sound of all, the Voice of Jesus who created them!

This is the World as it was in Genesis 1:31. The perfect, just and holy God of the Universe declared all was good. Then chapter 2 repeats the whole account of Creation from an anthropological (human) view, which fills in the details of man and woman, marriage and the Garden. Chapter 1 was cosmological and how we fit in the universe. So all is good and perfect. Then something terrible happens. Satan rebels and then enters the Paradise of God to ruin (so he thought) God's plan.

So where did the Fall originate. When did God's good creation get bad? For just a moment lets go back to that scene and see what happened. We need to go to Ezekiel 28 first.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SATAN

Satan's original state. Ezekiel 28:12-15 describes Satan prior to his fall. He enjoyed an exalted position in the presence of God; the brilliance of Heaven was his surrounding (28:13). He was called the "anointed ... covering cherub" who enjoyed the position of highest honor before God (28:14, 16). Isaiah refers to this supreme angel as "star of the morning (KJV Lucifer; NIV morning star), son of the dawn" (14:12). After he became God's chief adversary (Heb. *Σαταν*) he is never again called by any of these honorable titles. But in his pre-fall splendor he was filled with wisdom and beauty, and he was blameless (Ezek. 28:12, 15).

Satan's fall. Satan's fall is described in both Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. Because of his sin Satan was cast from the presence of God (Ezek. 28:16). The reason for Satan's downfall was his pride; his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and his wisdom became corrupt (28:17). The statement indicates Satan must have had extraordinarily high rank that led to his pride. Isaiah 14:12-14 further describes the sin that led to his downfall. Five "I will's" emphasize his sin (14:13-14). He desired to enter the very presence of God and establish his throne on God's throne above the other angels. He wanted to be like the "Most High." For that reason God thrust him down out of Heaven.

Before his fall, which obviously took place after the creation of the Garden of Eden, Satan was the "anointed cherub who covers" (v. 14). He was the highest ranking angelic being, concerned particularly with the glory of God. He was "on the holy mountain of God," and "walked in the midst of the stones of fire." That speaks of his dwelling in the immediate presence of God. How such a being, blameless since his creation, existing in a perfectly holy environment, could sin remains a mystery. That he did sin is a fact, however. All Ezekiel says of him is that "unrighteousness was found in you" (v. 15). He was then cast from his station among the holy ones in God's presence (v. 16), although he is still allowed access to that presence (Job 1:6; Rev. 12:10). It was then that he became Satan, the adversary; Apollyon, the destroyer; Devil, the slanderer.

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Best of all your memories would be remembering the sweetness of the sound of the voice of the Lord. About suppertime each day a gentle breeze would whisper by and then you would hear the voice of God. The Gardener and Planner of the Universe was walking amongst His creatures in the cool of the day. He was seeking fellowship with you His best friends whom He had made to look just like Him. And your ears that He created would hear the sweetest sound of all, the Voice of Jesus who created them!

This is the World as it was in Genesis 1:31. The perfect, just and holy God of the Universe declared all was good. Then chapter 2 repeats the whole account of Creation from an anthropological (human) view, which fills in the details of man and woman, marriage and the Garden. Chapter 1 was cosmological and how we fit in the universe. So all is good and perfect. Then something terrible happens. Satan rebels and then enters the Paradise of God to ruin (so he thought) God's plan.

So where did the Fall originate. When did God's good creation get bad?

For just a moment lets go back to that scene and see what happened. We need to go to Ezekiel 28 first.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SATAN

Satan's original state. Ezekiel 28:12-15 describes Satan prior to his fall. He enjoyed an exalted position in the presence of God; the brilliance of Heaven was his surrounding (28:13). He was called the "anointed ... covering cherub" who enjoyed the position of highest honor before God (28:14, 16). Isaiah refers to this supreme angel as "star of the morning (KJV Lucifer; NIV morning star), son of the dawn" (14:12). After he became God's chief adversary (Heb. Σαταν) he is never again called by any of these honorable titles. But in his pre-fall splendor he was filled with wisdom and beauty, and he was blameless (Ezek. 28:12, 15).

Satan's fall. Satan's fall is described in both Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. Because of his sin Satan was cast from the presence of God (Ezek. 28:16). The reason for Satan's downfall was his pride; his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and his wisdom became corrupt (28:17). The statement indicates Satan must have had extraordinarily high rank that led to his pride. Isaiah 14:12-14 further describes the sin that led to his downfall. Five "I will's" emphasize his sin (14:13-14). He desired to enter the very presence of God and establish his throne on God's throne above the other angels. He wanted to be like the "Most High." For that reason God thrust him down out of Heaven.

Before his fall, which obviously took place after the creation of the Garden of Eden, Satan was the "anointed cherub who covers" (v. 14). He was the highest ranking angelic being, concerned particularly with the glory of God. He was "on the holy mountain of God," and "walked in the midst of the stones of fire." That speaks of his dwelling in the immediate presence of God. How such a being, blameless since his creation, existing in a perfectly holy environment, could sin remains a mystery. That he did sin is a fact, however. All Ezekiel says of him is that "unrighteousness was found in you" (v. 15). He was then cast from his station among the holy ones in God's presence (v. 16), although he is still allowed access to that presence (Job 1:6; Rev. 12:10). It was then that he became Satan, the adversary; Apollyon, the destroyer; Devil, the

slanderer.

It is difficult for our finite minds to understand how a perfect being in a perfect environment could fall into sin. Ezekiel describes Lucifer's motivation in verse 17: "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor." Satan somehow became enamored with his beauty and splendor, and his response was the sin of pride, which led to rebellion.

Isaiah 14:12-14 confirms that it was indeed pride that caused Satan's downfall:

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

The first sin was pride, and every sin after that has been in some way an extension of pride. Pride led the angel Lucifer to exalt himself above his Creator and Lord. Because the bright "star of the morning" continually said, "I will, I will, I will" in opposition to God's will, he was cast out of heaven (Isa. 14:12-23). Because he said, "I am a god," the Lord cast him "from the mountain of God" (Ezek. 28:11-19). The original sin of Adam and Eve was pride, trusting in their own understanding above God's (Gen. 3:6-7). The writer of Proverbs warns, "When pride comes, then comes dishonor" (11:2), "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling" (16:18), and again "Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, is sin" (21:4).

Pride is the supreme temptation from Satan, because pride is at the heart of his own evil nature. Consequently, Satan makes sure that the Christian is never entirely free from the temptation of pride. We will always be in a battle with pride until the Lord takes us to be with Himself. Our only protection against pride, and our only source of humility, is a proper view of God. Pride is the sin of competing with God, and humility is the virtue of submitting to His supreme glory.

Pride comes in many forms. We may be tempted to be proud of our abilities, our possessions, our education, our social status, our appearance, our power, and even our biblical knowledge or religious accomplishments. But throughout Scripture the Lord calls His people to humility. "Before honor comes humility" (Prov. 15:33); "The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life" (22:4); "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips" (27:2).

THE KEY TO GOD'S BLESSING: HUMILITY

Humility is an ingredient of all spiritual blessing. Just as every sin has its roots in pride, every virtue has its roots in humility. Humility allows us to see ourselves as we are, because it shows us before God as He is. Just as pride is behind every conflict we have with other people and every problem of fellowship we have with the Lord, so humility is behind every harmonious human relationship, every spiritual success, and every moment of joyous fellowship with the Lord.