
HUMAN NATURE

What Is It?

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In this morally depraved society, many are now saying there is no evil in the heart of man. Others say man was born with an evil nature. Both of these assumptions are wrong.

What is human nature? And where did it come from?

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THE HUMAN MIND: WHAT A WONDER! IT CAN PRODUCE THE MOST sophisticated computer technology imaginable. We have sent men to walk on the surface of the moon—a robot to crawl on the surface of Mars, photographing the terrain for us to examine. Yet the same minds which produce such marvels of science and technology CANNOT SOLVE HUMAN EVILS, like war, violence, crime, immorality, dishonesty and deceit. The awesome mind of man has not brought about lasting peace. Indeed, the mind of man, contrary to what some modern scholars might think, has produced an abundance of evil, heartache and bloodshed. The question is, WHY? How can a mind that produces such incredible technology utterly fail when it comes to solving world problems? The answer: HUMAN NATURE. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart [of man] is *deceitful* above all things, and desperately WICKED: who can know it?” All of the evils plaguing society today can be blamed on the deceitful, wicked *human nature* in man.

But that statement raises many *vital* questions: What is human nature? Where did it come from? Did God create it in man? God reveals the answers to these questions in the Bible. But there is not one simple verse that gives all the answers. We find the answer revealed “here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10). We must begin at the very beginning.

WHERE DID SATAN'S EVIL NATURE COME FROM?

In Ephesians 3:9 we find that it was God “who created *all things* by Jesus Christ.” God creates. And there is always a great purpose behind anything God creates. He doesn't create in confusion or disarray, because “God is not the author of

confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33). But, you may reason, didn’t God create the archangel Lucifer, who became Satan the devil? How did Satan get to be the way he is if God is the one who created him? Where did his evil nature come from?

Notice Ezekiel 28:14-15: “Thou [Lucifer] art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I [God] have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast PERFECT in thy ways from the day that thou wast *created*....” Two things to notice: Lucifer was *created* by God, *and* he was created *perfect*. Lucifer had great knowledge, understanding and wisdom. He was the greatest being God could create by fiat. The rest of verse 15 continues, “till INIQUITY [OR LAWLESSNESS] was found in thee.” So this great being—the greatest being God could possibly create by fiat—who was taught at the very throne of God, SINNED and REBELLED against God. How could that have happened? God certainly *didn’t create an evil devil*. He created a perfect, beautiful archangel—Lucifer.

Isaiah asked the same question. “HOW ART THOU FALLEN from heaven, O LUCIFER, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12). God revealed the answer in the next two verses: “For *thou* hast said in *thine* heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt *my* throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH” (verses 13-14). Lucifer allowed his beauty to fill him with vanity. It wasn’t enough that God had placed him on the throne of this Earth to administer the government of God. He looked on what God had with *envy*—for God ruled the ENTIRE UNIVERSE. Lucifer thought he could eventually ascend up into the heavens and forcefully remove God from His throne! And so we see how Lucifer acquired this evil, sinful nature. He acquired it through FALSE REASONING, which led to rebellion. He falsely reasoned that he was just as good, if not better, than the God who created him.

Ezekiel 28:17 says, “Thine heart was lifted up BECAUSE OF THY BEAUTY, thou hast CORRUPTED thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness....” This perfect, beautiful being, who was full of great wisdom and knowledge, *became* corrupted because of

FALSE REASONING. He allowed the wisdom and knowledge God had given him to fill him with vanity. He then worked to deceive those angels he ruled over on this Earth. He led one third of the angels into rebellion against God and His laws (2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:4).

GOD CREATES MAN

So Satan acquired his evil, sinful nature by false reasoning. How then did man acquire his evil human nature? On the sixth day of the creation week, God created man. We were created in the very *likeness* of God, potentially to be created in the image, or character, of God through conversion (Genesis 1:26). That alone reveals that we weren't created with an *evil nature*, because God *does not* have an evil nature. Then in verse 28 it says, "God blessed them." God *blessed* Adam and Eve. He certainly didn't bless them by placing an evil, satanic nature in them. Furthermore, verse 31 says, "And God saw EVERY THING [including man] that he had made, and, behold, it was VERY GOOD." God blessed man and saw that His creation was VERY GOOD.

On the seventh day, the Sabbath, God rested from all that He had created. He began to teach Adam about His way of life—His divine laws. In Genesis 2:19, God brought all the animals He created before Adam. He instructed Adam to name all the animals—which Adam did *willingly and obediently*.

Herbert W. Armstrong wrote this in the *Good News* magazine of June 1976: "Absolutely NO REBELLION is indicated here. 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' (Romans 8:7)."

DUALITY IN CREATION

These early verses in Genesis reveal that Adam and Eve were not created with an evil nature. They were not created in a state of sinfulness. At the same time, however, Adam and Eve were **INCOMPLETE**. Their creation was **NOT YET FINISHED**. Mr. Armstrong continued in his article, “Nor, on the other hand, does it [the account in Genesis] reveal a nature filled with the Spirit of God.” The Bible reveals that man was created perfect, without an evil nature. But that perfect creation was also *incomplete spiritually*. Man was incomplete because he needed God’s Spirit. As is the case with most everything God creates, He creates in dual stages. The creation of man was dual. Man’s incomplete creation could have been completed through the tree of life, which God freely offered to Adam (Genesis 2:9).

But let’s first understand the purpose God had in creating man. In Genesis 1:26, God said man was created in His own image and likeness. God created us to be like Him! Notice what Mr. Armstrong wrote: “[T]o carry out God’s purpose for

Man Needs God’s Spirit

Excerpt from *Mystery of the Ages* by Herbert W. Armstrong

LET this point be emphasized. When the first man, Adam, rejected the tree of life, and took to himself the knowledge of good and evil, he limited his power and ability to do good to the level of his human spirit. There is good as well as evil in human nature. Good is a spiritual attribute, not a physical or material action. Had Adam taken of the tree of life, the Holy Spirit of God would have entered him and joined with his spirit, uniting him with God as a son of God. The Holy Spirit meant more than spiritual knowledge of good. Not the hearers of the law (good) but the doers of the law are justified (Romans 2:13). Love is the fulfilling of the law, but not human love. It requires the “love OF GOD... shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit]” (Romans 5:5).

God revealed His law to the nation Israel. One of the purposes of this nation was to prove by human experience that man without the Spirit of God within him cannot be righteous.

the inhabitants of the Earth, to accomplish the grand and awesome PURPOSE throughout the entire universe that could have been theirs [Lucifer's and the angels'], GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF THROUGH HUMAN BEINGS!" (ibid.). That was God's purpose for creating man—He was reproducing Himself! Because of the awesome potential of man, God created in us a human spirit—mind power to think and reason like God.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Man was created out of the dust of the ground and he *became* a "living soul" (Genesis 2:7). The popular belief that man *has* a soul is false. Man *is* a soul. But man *has* a spirit (Job 32:8). Mr. Armstrong referred to it as the *human spirit*. But how does that human spirit work? How does it function in your life? Mr. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*: "What, then, is the function of this 'human' spirit? It is NOT a 'soul.' But, 1) it imparts the power of intellect—of thinking, and of MIND power, to the human brain; and 2) it is the very means God has instilled, making possible a personal relationship between human MAN and divine God."

This is what animals do not have. This is the distinguishing difference between mankind and animals. "Animals," Mr. Armstrong wrote, "have BRAIN, but no intellect—instinct, but no ability to develop HOLY and GODLY CHARACTER. And that pictures the transcendental DIFFERENCE between animal BRAIN and human MIND" (*What Science Can't Discover About the Human Mind*).

God created us with a human spirit. But that spirit needed *another* spirit to be complete—the Spirit of God. Paul makes this abundantly clear: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10). God reveals spiritual knowledge *through His Spirit*. That is what God was offering Adam and Eve through the tree of life—His Spirit. Notice the difference between God's Spirit and the human spirit: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the SPIRIT OF MAN which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the SPIRIT OF GOD" (verse 11).

Why is this important? Some might ask, why couldn't God just create billions of sinless creatures that couldn't sin?

Yet God has already done that in the form of animals. They have no choices to make as Adam and Eve did—nor as you and I do. Animals are sinless creatures that do only as their instincts lead them.

The human spirit in mankind is what makes us so different. We have the ability to think and reason—to make choices. God designed it that way; because in us, God is reproducing Himself! Sinless animals *can* be created *instantly*. Godly character, however, *CANNOT*. It takes *time*.

God had to know that the likelihood was very high for mankind to be deceived by Satan. Man, after all, was created lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:7)—and many of the angels had sinned. Satan sinned even after being trained at the universe headquarters. God knew it was very likely that man would sin. It didn't catch God by surprise. Satan did not ruin God's plan. God expected it. That is why it says the Lamb was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). It was already determined that one member of the God Kingdom, the Word, would be made flesh and would die to pay the penalty for the sins of this world. (Of all humans, only Christ's life could pay that penalty because, as Creator of all things, He alone was worthy to pay the awesome price for the sins of all mankind—Ephesians 3:9.) At the same time, God provided a supreme power, His Holy Spirit, by which mankind could actually partake of the very mind of God. *With this power, man can overcome Satan.*

God created us with a human spirit so that it could connect with God's Spirit, without which we are incomplete (1 Corinthians 2:11). After man's sin, the tree of life, or the Holy Spirit, was cut off from man (Genesis 3:22-24). That left man with just his human spirit alone to decide for himself what is right and wrong. And that is where Satan enters the picture. For it is through this same human spirit that Satan deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

HOW ADAM AND EVE ACQUIRED HUMAN NATURE

As we have seen, man was created perfect, yet incomplete. God personally instructed Adam and Eve in His laws and commands before Satan was allowed to tempt them. Adam and

Eve were thoroughly instructed in the administration of God's government.

In the midst of the Garden of Eden was the tree of life. It was through this tree that God offered Adam and Eve

Where Human Nature Has Brought Us

Excerpt from *Mystery of the Ages* by Herbert W. Armstrong

GOD endowed man with MIND power, capable of recognizing the error of this way, *if willing*. Adam could have obeyed God, resisted Satan and qualified to replace Satan as Earth RULER, administering the GOVERNMENT OF GOD. But Adam disobeyed God, succumbed to Satan. His children have done so ever since.

Jesus Christ obeyed God, kept God's commandments, resisted Satan, never allowed what we call "human nature" to enter Him. He conquered the devil, and qualified to administer the world-ruling GOVERNMENT OF GOD. Then He ascended to heaven to officially receive this world RULE. The heavens have received Him UNTIL—notice it, Acts 3:19-21, only "UNTIL the times of RESTITUTION of all things"—that is, the RESTORING of what had been taken away—THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD!

That time is almost upon us NOW! This very outburst of universal VIOLENCE is one of the signs! "As it was in the days of Noah," said Jesus, "so shall it be," just before the days of Christ's return to RESTORE THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and bring us PEACE! Just before the Flood, there was illicit sex and VIOLENCE! It was not thus 60 years ago. IT IS A TIME OF ILLICIT SEX AND VIOLENCE TODAY!

Can't we see the handwriting on the wall?

WHY all this violence—this immorality?

HERE IS THE CAUSE! HUMAN NATURE—WHICH IS VANITY—without any PURPOSE, and absence of parental training and discipline!

There is no sense of PURPOSE today. We are told we must adjust to living in a world of problems *with no solutions!* Nuclear war—the erasure of human life from the Earth—appears to be just around the corner—liable to strike us any second....

Human nature is the basic cause of all violence, war, crime—all our troubles in this present evil world!

immortal life. The other tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, caused death (Genesis 2:17).

Only after Adam and Eve were trained in God's way did God allow Satan to tempt them. Satan got to Adam through his wife Eve. Satan's goal was to get Adam and Eve to believe that all God had taught them was a lie. Notice Genesis 3:4: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall NOT surely die." In chapter 2, verse 17, God said they WOULD "surely die" if they took of the wrong tree. But according to Satan, *God was lying*.

Eventually, Eve believed Satan was right and that God was a liar. Adam followed along in choosing rebellion. They took unto themselves the right to choose between good and evil by eating from the forbidden tree. God had ALREADY DETERMINED WHAT WAS BEST for them, which is what they would have had—the very best—if they had taken of the tree of life.

Notice what happened: "And the EYES of them both were OPENED, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Genesis 3:7). Their eyes were *opened*. There was a MIND CHANGE. The spirit of rebellion had entered into their minds, or hearts. Again, this rebellious, evil nature was not there prior to the temptation. But neither did they have minds filled with the Spirit of God. That's *why* they needed the tree of life! Satan acquired his sinful, evil nature through FALSE REASONING. But Adam and Eve received their evil nature DIRECTLY FROM SATAN.

SATAN BROADCASTS

So Adam and Eve received their evil human nature from Satan. But *how* did that happen? Mr. Armstrong once said that he was not able to fully understand how Satan deceives and sways mankind until the invention of modern forms of communication—most of which are transmitted invisibly through the air.

Notice Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the POWER OF THE AIR, the *spirit* that now worketh in the children of disobedience." This of course is referring to Satan the devil. He is the "prince of the power of the air." He broadcasts his attitudes to mankind like a television signal transmits over

the airwaves directly to the tv sets. That is how Satan got to Eve—*through her human spirit*.

Satan caused Eve to doubt God. It was all very subtle. Satan did not approach Eve and say, “I am Satan the devil and I command you to choose my way.” No, Satan very subtly and deceptively got to Eve through her human spirit. Here is what Mr. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*: “He [Satan] put DOUBTS in her mind about God’s veracity. He put a sense of injustice and resentment within her. He deceived her into believing God had been unfair—selfish. He subtly injected vanity of mind. He misled her into thinking it was *right* to take of the forbidden fruit.” (You may write for a free copy of *Mystery of the Ages*.)

But what about Adam? There is a clear distinction between what happened to Adam and what happened to Eve. Satan deceived Eve into thinking he was right. Paul wrote, “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And ADAM WAS NOT DECEIVED, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Timothy 2:13-14). Mr. Armstrong wrote, “Adam disobeyed God and sinned deliberately. But even though he was not deceived in this original temptation, his deliberate disobedience of God’s explicit command cut him off from God, producing a state of mental perversion and opening his mind to the deceptions of Satan” (ibid.).

And so we read in Genesis 3:7 that “the eyes of them BOTH were opened.” They both acquired this evil, sinful human nature directly from Satan himself. Now, how did the rest of mankind acquire this evil human nature?

THE REST OF MANKIND

Most in the world today assume this evil nature is something every human being is born with. This theory underestimates the great power of our adversary, Satan the devil. Notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the SERPENT BEGUILED EVE through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). In verse 2, Paul said he desired to present them as a “chaste virgin to Christ.” Paul feared that the Corinthians would revert back to their former

ways before they came into the knowledge of the truth. Prior to that time, they had been deceived just as Eve was! In other words, directly by Satan's broadcasting.

Mr. Armstrong wrote in the June 1976 *Good News*, "Eve did not have a mind that was evil *before* Satan came along and confronted her. But Satan, by subtlety, deceived Eve. Eve's children were not born with this evil nature. Nor were the people of the Corinthian church. But Paul feared, lest Satan, still around after some 4,000 years, pervert Corinthian minds directly, as he had done to Eve."

Like Eve, the rest of mankind after her has been *deceived*. Mr. Armstrong went on to say: "[T]he selfishness, hostility, deceitfulness, wickedness, rebellion, etc. that we call 'HUMAN NATURE' is actually SATAN'S NATURE. It is Satan's ATTITUDE. And broadcasting it, surcharging the air with it, Satan actually NOW WORKS IN the unsuspecting all over the world today! That is HOW Satan deceives the whole world today (Revelation 12:9; 20:3)."

We have seen that Lucifer acquired his evil nature through FALSE REASONING. Eve acquired it through Satan. Adam, though he wasn't deceived, likewise acquired his evil nature through false reasoning under the influence of Satan. And today, we live in a world where *everyone* has acquired this evil HUMAN NATURE—not from heredity—not from the environment—but directly from Satan the devil. That is why Revelation 12:9 says: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, *which deceiveth the whole world* . . ." Churches today do not want to believe this verse. The *whole world* is deceived. The very fact that they are deceived means they don't KNOW it!

Notice 2 Corinthians 4:4: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not . . ." Satan is the god of this world. And notice, he has *blinded* mankind. The world didn't inherit an evil nature. It was caused by Satan. He is the prince of the power of the air. People cannot see Satan. That's what makes him so deceptive. He gets to us through the human spirit. Satan's attitudes of self-centeredness, anger, envy and strife begin to affect us when we are small babies. Those attitudes revolving around self become absorbed and eventually become normal. In other words, they become habitual. As Mr. Armstrong often said, "That which

has become *habitual* and therefore *natural* becomes a NATURE within us.” That is why so many assume we were all just born with an evil, self-centered nature—because it seems so natural and normal to be that way.

Obviously, this human nature manifests itself in varying degrees. One person can become more evil than another. But the overall attitude of vanity and self-centeredness is something we all have and must overcome. That can only be done by the power of God living in us.

HUMAN NATURE DEFINED IN BIBLE

As we have seen, Adam and Eve were not created in a state of rebellion and sin. They were created incomplete. They needed the Spirit of God.

Remember Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Yet Genesis shows Adam and Eve to be “good” and obedient prior to the temptation by Satan. So when there are verses in the Bible that describe the evil, sinful nature of carnal-minded man, they are speaking of a human mind that has been deceived by Satan, like Eve—a mind that has Satan’s nature. A human being without God’s knowledge, who has been swayed and deceived by Satan’s nature, is one who is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

Notice this simple, yet profound, definition of human nature, as written in Herbert W. Armstrong’s book *The Missing Dimension in Sex*: “Human nature is, simply, the subconscious *pull* of a *definite attitude* of mind. It is the attitude that became Satan’s. It is the *natural* attitude implanted from infancy by the invisible Satan. It is the attitude of vanity—of *self-concern*—of lust and greed. It is the attitude of hostility to others, and resentment of authority over it.” (*The Missing Dimension in Sex* is also yours free for the asking.)

Notice Romans 8:7: “Because the carnal mind [a mind apart from God’s Spirit] is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” When we understand that it is actually Satan’s nature in us and that we are *not* born with it, we can clearly understand why man is wicked and hostile toward God: because SATAN hates God.

Some might assume from Romans 8:20 that we were CREATED with *vanity* since it says “the creature was made subject to vanity.” The Revised Standard Version translates this passage more clearly. Beginning in verse 19, it says, “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.” The *creation*, as it is properly translated here, is referring to all the stars, planets, moons and suns in the universe. That creation is waiting for us—“the revealing of the sons of God.” Continuing: “for the creation [all the suns, moons, stars and planets] was subjected to futility [uselessness], not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and *not only the creation*, BUT WE OURSELVES, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption [the birth] as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (verses 20-23). Romans 8:20 does not say we were created *with* vanity. Everything God creates is good! These verses point out that it is the creation around us that now sits in futility, just waiting for the birth of the firstfruits—because we will have a part in beautifying the creation that has been in decay since Lucifer rebelled.

Perhaps Ecclesiastes 7:29 sums it up best. Moffatt translates this verse, “Here is all I have been able to discover: *God made the race of men upright*, BUT MANY A CUNNING WILE HAVE THEY CONTRIVED.” Who is the most cunning, wily, deceptive being of all? Satan the devil, of course! Man was MADE UPRIGHT. But he has *acquired* his evil nature because of Satan’s deception.

CHRISTIAN CONVERSION

But some might be asking, what about converted Christians? Do they have this evil human nature inherent within them?

When we come to God in repentance prior to baptism, we *repent* for living the way of Satan! A repentant sinner rejects that way and turns to God’s way of life—he subjects himself to God’s government. But conversion does not disconnect us from Satan’s broadcast. There will always be the tendency to return to our selfish ways. This is what a true Christian must strive to

overcome. That's why the Bible says so much about overcoming and remaining faithful to the end. When Jesus admonished us to overcome, He meant for us to overcome the way of Satan.

That brings us back to the ultimate purpose of why man was created in the first place—TO BECOME GOD. God is reproducing Himself. He is calling out a select few at this point to assist Him in teaching others in the World Tomorrow. In preparing for that, they must overcome JUST AS JESUS CHRIST DID (1 Peter 2:21; Revelation 2:26; 3:21). We can't overcome by our own power. It has to be Jesus Christ living again in us by the power of God's Spirit (Galatians 2:20; see also Zechariah 4:6). God is creating something very beautiful in us. "[W]e are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," as Paul said (Ephesians 2:10).

But as you look around at this evil world, which is getting worse and worse, it is increasingly more difficult to find God's workmanship—His works manifested in human beings. People may talk a lot about good works. As a society, we may *talk* about love. But it's not God's love. It's the kind of love Ezekiel prophesied to be extant just before Christ's return: "[W]ith their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezekiel 33:31). Mere words have done nothing to solve the evils and suffering of this world.

"For this is the love of God, that we *keep his commandments*: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). Real love—God's love—is *action*. It is keeping God's commandments. And unless our peoples stop talking about love and start obeying God's law, the evils and moral depravity we see all around us will only get worse. Only when we make a stand, with firm resolve, and determine to live according to God's way, will we ever eradicate the evil nature—actually Satan's nature—which resides in the mind of man. Only then, when every human being rejects Satan's way and seeks God's Spirit-power, will we be able to solve the problems that plague mankind.

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