

# **The Satanic Rebellion: Background to the Tribulation**

## **Part 3**

### **The Purpose, Creation and Fall of Man** (also available on-line at [www.ichthys.com](http://www.ichthys.com)) by Dr. Robert D. Luginbill

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**Introduction:** As we saw in our last installment, until the restoration of earth and God's reconstitution of the heavenly lights, Lucifer, the "light-bearer" and his followers had found themselves in the dark, awaiting their fate. Satan's coup d'état had ended a dismal failure, and his nefarious experimentations on earth, the original Eden, had been summarily terminated by a divine intervention that left not only the earth but the surrounding universe as well buried in deep darkness. We know from the testimony of scripture that a trial followed in which God condemned Satan and his fallen angels for their rejection of His authority and for their rebellion:

Behold, He does not place [unreserved] trust in His servants, but charges [even] His angels with error.  
Job 4:18

Then He will say to those on His left, “Away from Me, you accursed ones, into the eternal fire [already] *prepared for the devil and his angels*.  
Matthew 25:41

Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.  
John 16:11

Satan’s case (and that of his followers) has thus already been adjudicated and his ultimate fate pronounced. By the time he and his fallen angels are cast down to the earth during the Great Tribulation (Rev.12:7-9), he will be well aware of the fact that he has “but little time left” (Rev.12:12). At the conclusion of human history, but not until that point has been reached at the end of the millennial rule of Christ, Satan will face the execution of his sentence (Rev.20:10; Is.24:21-22), a verdict adjudged before human history began. The question may well be posed, “why the delay in judgment? Why did God not simply plunge the devil and his minions into the fires of hell immediately after their just condemnation?” The answer to all such questions is intimately bound up with God’s creation of another species of sentient, morally responsible creatures, namely, Man. So it is that to the purpose, creation and fall of mankind we must now turn.

## **I. The Purpose of Man**

Though already under sentence of death for his unrepentant attempt to overthrow God’s rule over the universe (Job 4:18; Matt.25:41; Jn.16:11), Satan still retains his freedom of action. We find him spying on our first parents in the garden (Gen.3), appearing before the Lord to slander our brethren (Job 1&2; Zech.3; Rev.12:10), and prowling the earth in search of believers whose defenses are down (1Pet.5:8). The reason for the devil’s intense interest in mankind is similar to the reason for our creation in the first place (and to the reason for the delay in carrying out the sentence of death under which he stands as well): *Man is meant as a response to Satan’s rebellion*, a living refutation of the devil’s slanderous lies against the character of God. God has created mankind 1) to demonstrate to all angelic kind His *ability to reconcile* His creatures to Himself, and 2) *to actually replace* all that was lost through the devil’s defection.

1. Man created to demonstrate God’s righteousness in acting mercifully: Although every aspect of God’s perfect character is visible in His gracious dealings with the human race, the demonstration of His righteousness toward us in salvation most directly answers Satan’s slanders regarding God’s ability to provide reconciliation. It will be remembered (from part 1 of this series) that part of the devil’s appeal to his potential followers rested on his assurance that God would be unable to effect any reconciliation between Himself and His rebellious creatures. Satan reasoned that God’s righteousness would stand in the way of His mercy and thus make forgiveness impossible. God would thus be “put in a box”, unable to act in mercy without compromise, unable to execute punishment without permanently marring His creation in an irreversible way. No matter how much He might dislike it, God would be forced to tolerate Satan’s usurpation of power. And though it would not have formed part of his public pitch, the

devil was no doubt also working on the “safety in numbers” principle, reckoning that while God might choose to chastise one rebel, removing the vast multitude of angels whom Satan had been able to recruit would create an irreparable rift in the fabric of the universe. But the devil’s logic failed to take into account the ineffable love of God, and was oblivious to the idea that our God is a God of such grace that He would even sacrifice His most beloved possession, His Son, Jesus Christ, on our behalf. Satan was correct about the righteousness of God preventing His mercy from arbitrarily forgiving sin in any form, but what the devil did not count on was God’s willingness to pay for sin Himself through the sacrifice of His Son, so that we might justly be accounted righteous in His eyes (2Cor.5:21):

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the *power* whereby God may save everyone who believes (whether the Jew first, or the Greek). *Because in it the righteousness of God is revealed* from faith to faith, as it is written, “[it is he who is] righteous on account of his faith [who] shall live”.  
Romans 1:16-17

We are saved by faith in the Person and work of the One who died in our place and paid the price of sin for us, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Because Jesus paid the price, God can forgive our sin, not arbitrarily, but justly, since it has been paid for in full in the most precious coin. God is therefore not only merciful to forgive us and welcome us into His family when we believe in Jesus, He is also just in justifying us, righteous in proclaiming us righteous, “not from works of righteousness which we have done” (Tit.3:5), but from our acceptance of the work of the One who died for us. Angels being angels, as we have seen (part 1), any decision to rebel against God would be final. Possessed as they are of perceptive abilities that far exceed our material limitations, it can be truly said of them that “they knew what they were getting into” (at least as far as creatures can know). Reconciliation of fallen angels to a merciful God was therefore never a likely possibility – because *they* would not have it, *not* because God could not or would not do it.<sup>1</sup> The truth of this last point He has proven irrefutably by the loving sacrifice of His only Son on mankind’s behalf, paying a price so steep we can only dimly comprehend it. If the devil and his angels had been of a mind to receive such an incomparable gesture of sacrifice and mercy, God would have generously provided it. By giving up His Son to the cross, God has demonstrated beyond any shadow of a doubt both His willingness and His ability to rescue His creatures, for He has in fact done so for us, even though it meant paying the price His righteousness demanded with the blood of His own Son.

Thus human history is on the one hand a demonstration to angelic kind (elect as well as fallen) of God’s mercy and His ability to act justly in providing that mercy (albeit at tremendous cost to Himself). We human beings are actually experiencing God’s love and mercy as He provides for us here in the world despite the devil’s opposition. To the angels, however, we are a demonstration of that love and mercy, made efficacious through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and

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<sup>1</sup> cf. especially Heb.2:16: “For certainly it is not angels with whom He consorts, but rather the seed of Abraham with whom He associates Himself”.

our faith in Him. Being spirits and so not subject to the material limits that so try our human hearts of flesh, they must learn by observation, and observe us they do in great earnestness (Job 1&2; Matt.18:10; Lk.15:10; 1Cor.4:9; 11:10; 1Pet.1:12).<sup>2</sup> That this demonstration will have been one of over seven thousand years' duration (when human history shall have finally run its course) is merely further proof of the graciousness and long-suffering of God (Is.30:18; Rom.2:4; 2Pet.3:9; 3:15 etc.). Through the long course of this demonstration (which is our collective human experience), the elect angels will have come to know God and His perfect character better than ever before, while the fallen angels will see their leader's every blasphemous accusation refuted and destroyed in voluminous detail. And when all is said and done, God's righteousness will have been affirmed as beyond reproach, proved beyond a shadow of a doubt in the merciful salvation of believing mankind.

2. Man created to replace Satan and his angels: The creation of Man following the Genesis Gap judgment (see Part 2, our previous study) is a clear indication that the two events are intimately related. For God to create a new species of creature, possessing along with the angels both spirituality and free will, and then to deposit them on the very scene of Satan's rebellious activity was no subtle indication that at least one of God's purposes for mankind would be the replacement of the devil and his evil legions. This must have been abundantly and immediately clear to Satan. For here was a new moral creature who (left to his own devices) might just do what he and his would not: *obey God's will without rebelling against Him*. As soon as the requisite population was reached through procreation, Satan and company could be removed, wholeness and completeness having thus been restored. Judgment, after all, had already been pronounced (Job 4:18; Matt.25:41; Jn.16:11). What could remain except for a one-for-one replacement of fallen angels with human beings, once our numbers became sufficient? With judgment set, execution of God's sentence against the devil would be inevitable if not immediate (cf. Rev.20:10):

And it will come to pass on that day (i.e., the "day of the Lord"), that the Lord will punish the host of heaven above (i.e., the devil and his angels), and the kings of the earth below (i.e., those who have opposed His Christ), and they will be gathered together, bound in a dungeon, jailed and imprisoned. ***And after many days they will be punished.***  
Isaiah 24:21-22

Therefore, with the creation of Man, a creature capable of procreation unlike the angels, the de facto removal of the only remaining, tangible barrier to Satan's execution was only a matter of time.

The principle of God's desire to retrieve what is lost and replace what is missing is clearly seen in scripture in the parable of the lost sheep (Matt.18:12-14; Lk.15:4-10), the law of levirate

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<sup>2</sup> See Peter #22 for a more detailed development of this principle. The issue is also addressed in Part 1 of this series.

marriage (Deut.25:5-6), and, of course, in His longing for all mankind to accept the gift of Jesus Christ and return to Him (cf. Ezek.18:23; Matt.18:14; Jn.12:47; 2Pet.3:9):

[God] who wants all men to be saved and come to accept the truth.  
1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:4

There is ample evidence to suggest that elect mankind is, in effect, replacing fallen angelic kind in God's universal order (Lk.10:17-20; 1Cor.6:3; Rev.20:4). The principle is most clearly seen in the God-Man's replacement of the original covering cherub (see Part 1): Lucifer (the "light bearer") replaced by the Morning Star, Jesus Christ (cf. Is.14:12 with 2Pet.1:19; Rev.2:28; 22:16). Thus it is only fitting that the followers of the Morning Star should replace Lucifer's followers. In this way the wholeness and integrity of the creation will be restored, while everything that was lost will be replaced with something even better: willing worshipers of God in union with His Son, the God-Man, so that ultimately "God may be all in all" (1Cor.15:28). Satan's motives for precipitating the fall of Man are therefore clear. Unwilling to repent, neither could he afford to accept the new threat the status quo entailed.

3. Man created for the glory of God: The replacement of Satan and his followers with willing worshipers, and the ample demonstration of God's love and righteousness through the sacrifice of His Son to save these sinful human beings abundantly redounds to the great glory of God. After watching the events of human history unfold, the elect angels (and, in fact, all creatures) are moved to praise and glorify the Lord Almighty for His matchless grace (cf. Ps.148-150):

To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!  
Revelation 5:13b NIV

It is for God's praise, for God's glory, that we have been created (Is.60:21; Jn.17:10; 21:19; Rom.9:23). By making us and by saving us through Christ, God shows His love and exposes the devil's lies. In us, in what He has done for us, the glory of God shines forth, and those who love Him cannot help but praise Him:

Having foreordained us in [His] love for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will, for the purpose of producing *praise for the glory* of His grace which He has graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved [One].  
Ephesians 1:5-6

In whom we also have an inheritance, having been ordained according to the design of Him who is working everything out according to the desire of His will, that we who have previously placed our hope in Christ might serve the purpose of generating *praise for His glory*.  
Ephesians 1:11-12

Everyone who is called by my Name, *for My glory I have created him*, I have formed him, indeed, I have made him.

Isaiah 43:7

As the passages above indicate, only *regenerate* human beings (i.e., believers in Christ) form the echelon of replacement for fallen angelic kind. Human beings who choose to reject God's gracious gift of Jesus Christ will share the fate of the devil and his followers in the lake of fire (Rev.20:11-15). This too is a part of the demonstration of the righteousness of God, and also redounds to His great glory. Not only will the entire universe witness His gracious provision of mercy towards all who turn to Him, but all who oppose His will, Satan and all rebels, be they angels or men, will be crushed materially (in judgment) as well as spiritually (through the demonstration of human history; cf. Ps.76:10). And everyone, whether rebellious or regenerate, will eventually acknowledge the majesty, the righteousness, the glory of God:

By Myself I have sworn. From my mouth a righteous word has gone forth, which will not be revoked, that every knee will bow to Me, and to Me every tongue will swear. And so they will acknowledge Me: "Only in the Lord are righteousness and might." Before Him will come all who raged against Him and they will be put to shame.

Isaiah 45:23-24

It is in the nature of God not to let a lie stand, but instead to expose all lies to the blinding light of the truth. Human history constitutes, in effect, the "last judgment" of fallen angelic kind, a vivid, living demonstration of their error and utter sinfulness in the course of which "every mouth will be stopped" (i.e., every excuse destroyed: cf. Rom.3:19; Ps.107:42; Mich.7:16) and at the end of which every knee will bow and tongue declare the glory of God and the grace of God in the gift of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.14:11; Phil.2:10-11).

## **II. The Creation of Man**

Although we owe our creation in part to God's response to the rebellious defection of the devil and his followers, we have ever been in God's plan, and ever in His love. God was under no obligation to create angelic kind. He was under no obligation to create the human race. He did not have to give His Son to die for us. He did not have to pay that awful price the magnitude of which we can only dimly hope to comprehend. Yet create us He did. In making us He shared Himself with us. He blessed us in making us, with blessings that have only just begun to flow our way. To create us, to save us, though it cost Him His Son, to make us part of His family, to take us to Himself and ultimately to come to reside with us forever, these are the acts of a God who is love itself, and we are truly blessed to call Him Father.

1. The Image and Likeness of God: According to the first chapter of Genesis, God created Man and Woman on the sixth day of restoration. After the heavens had been restored, and the earth refitted and replenished, when all conditions were suitable and everything marvelously in place,

God gave life to our first parents, Adam and Eve, forming them and depositing them in a place of perfection:

Then God said, “Let us make Man in our image, according to our likeness, *so that he may rule* over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and over the beasts and over the whole earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”. So God created the man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

As Genesis 1:26 indicates, the express purpose of Man’s creation is his rule and oversight of the newly reconstructed earth (along with its creatures). This purpose is reemphasized at several points in the more detailed narrative of Adam’s creation in Genesis chapter two:

Now Man did not yet exist *to care for the land*.

Genesis 2:5b

So the Lord God took Adam and placed him in the garden of Eden *to care for it and to guard it*.

Genesis 2:15

Now as we saw in Part 1 of this series, Satan was the first trustee of earth, the original Eden, where he held the prestigious position of “covering cherub”, i.e., the guardian of the throne of God on the Holy Mountain of the primeval, as yet unblemished earth. It was this pristine earth of which he seized temporary control in his bid to lead the angels in revolt against the Lord Almighty. Placing Man on this same earth, now rejuvenated, with a mandate similar to the one which Satan had rejected, is a clear indication that God meant Man (and his progeny) to assume a role very similar to the one abdicated by Satan (and his followers): namely, faithful, obedient supervision of God’s creation. Now as we have seen, while angels and men are quite different in some important respects (most notably in the qualitatively superior longevity, knowledge and absence of corporeality possessed by the angels), we do share one critical similarity: both species possess spirituality of a type that mirrors the image and the likeness of their Creator; both species are intelligent, sentient, morally responsible, capable of being put in a position of responsibility. But the most critical point of comparison in each case, for both Man and angels, is the ability, indeed the necessity, of making *a conscious choice* to serve faithfully. For the angels, the tangible test was continued allegiance to God or defection to the devil; for Adam and Eve it was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen.2:16-17). But for both species there was a test *and the corresponding ability of spirit to choose*. Beyond all argument, God could have created innumerable beings to serve Him who would have been incapable of sin or rebellion. But God desires instead, creatures who will choose for Him of their own free will, who will love Him and serve Him and worship Him *willingly* (Jn.4:23). To be proper replacements for Satan and his followers, mankind had to possess a spiritual makeup that was essentially the same as the angels in two important respects: 1) the ability to make responsible and responsive choices (with the mental and emotional assets to support this quality), and 2) individuality (i.e., a personality

unique and independent from all others in the species). Like the angels, Man is a creature capable of exercising and responding to authority within the parameters laid down by God, and, like the angels, every one of us must make these essential choices for ourselves. These two essential qualities of spirit (i.e., the ability to choose for God and the individual responsibility to do so) are referred to in the Genesis 1:26-27 description as the “image and likeness of God”:<sup>3</sup>

Then God said, “Let us make Man *in our image, according to our likeness*, so that he may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and over the beasts and over the whole earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”. So God created Man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.  
Genesis 1:26-27

It is almost universally acknowledged that the purpose of the description “in our image, according to our likeness” is to mark out the similarities between Man and God. Naturally, the difficulty of comparing infinite God with finite Man makes any such analogy problematic, but as men and women of faith, we understand that God was well aware of this when He gave these words to Moses to pen. “Image and likeness”, when properly understood, do in fact give us a wonderfully precise description of the ways in which this new creature would be like His Maker.

The first thing to understand about “image and likeness” is that the points of analogy between God and Man are entirely *spiritual*. And while it is true that more than one misguided theologian over the course of the millennia has attempted to bring Adam’s physical shape somehow into the picture of “image and likeness”, as Christians who believe in a God who made the universe and is Himself entirely spiritual, we must of necessity reject such fanciful notions out of hand.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, and this point is considerably more controversial, the “image” of God and the “likeness” of God, though both spiritual, are not identical. In an effort to make the best out of a bad argument, one often hears proponents of the “image only” school say that “image and likeness explain each other”, or claims to that effect. But such pleas bespeak a clear embarrassment about the need to essentially explain away the second phrase “in our likeness”. From the standpoint of those of us who believe in the economy and purposefulness of what the Word of God has to say, “in our likeness” on the face of it *ought* to be providing additional information. This is especially the case when we consider that the two words “image” and “likeness” are introduced by different Hebrew prepositions with quite different meanings.

In fact, the two phrases “in Our image” and “in Our likeness” describe two very distinct areas of spiritual similarity between God and Man. Throughout the history of the Church, scholars have

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<sup>3</sup> J.E. Hartley in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, R.L. Harris, G.L. Archer, B.K. Waltke edd. (Chicago 1980) v.2 p.768, points out that *tselem* and *demuth* are immediately ***explained*** by Man’s rulership over the creatures.

<sup>4</sup> F. Delitzsch, *A System of Biblical Psychology* (Erlangen 1855) 78-87, points out that the Church Fathers generally saw the image and likeness in a spiritual sense.



struggled with this problem, and the roots of the solution (if not the solution itself) are to be found in the likes of Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, and the Schoolmen, with the distinction (generally put) being between a general principle (image) and an individual application (likeness).<sup>5</sup> It has fallen to the lot of modern exegetes to move the discussion away from biblical ethics and back to biblical psychology (where it properly belongs). J. Laidlaw's insightful analysis that saw in image and likeness both (species-wide) self-consciousness and individual personality is very close to the mark.<sup>6</sup> Laidlaw, however, took image and likeness to represent this distinction collectively, and it falls to the great credit of R.B. Thieme to have first seen "image" as mankind's common spiritual *essence* (analogous to the *divine essence* which is common to all three members of the Trinity), and "likeness" as the individual *personality* of distinct human beings (analogous to the *different persons* of the three members of the Trinity).<sup>7</sup>

That this interpretation has hit upon the exact truth of what distinguishes the likeness and image is made all the more clear by the two Hebrew prepositions with which the two terms are introduced. Man is said to be made *in* the image of God, but *according to* the likeness of God. As many have affirmed (indeed, the point is obvious to all with even a rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew), the preposition *be* (b), translated "in" above, ought by all rights to express a much closer relationship than the preposition *ce* (k), translated "according to" above.<sup>8</sup> This contrast of usage corresponds nicely to the distinction we have affirmed: Man's spiritual nature is more closely parallel to God's image than to God's likeness. In terms of our common human *essence*, the essence of God provides a rather close parallel in terms of the points of commonality that are important for Man to be a sufficient replacement for the fallen angels in every way: like the angels, we have delegated authority which authority parallels the sovereignty of God, and the spiritual facets and abilities to make proper use of it, which facets parallel in a very finite way the infinite essence of God. In terms of our individual human *personalities*, however, the three persons of the Trinity offer a similar, though somewhat looser, parallel. Like the Trinity, mankind is composed of multiple members, each possessed of an identical spiritual essence; but unlike the Trinity, we are not so closely bound together as a species in terms of our essence so as to be "one" on anything like the level that is true of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore the difference in closeness of comparison to God between "image" and "likeness" is not just one of quantity (i.e., very many human beings, only three members of the Trinity), but also qualitative on two separate levels: 1) the obvious disparity between a Person of the Trinity and a human personality, but also 2) the qualitative difference between a spiritually unified Trinity and

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<sup>5</sup> See Trench's discussion in *Synonyms of the New Testament* (London 1880) 49-53.

<sup>6</sup> *The Biblical Doctrine of Man* (Edinburgh 1895) 160-175.

<sup>7</sup> R.B. Thieme Jr., *Adam's Rib* (Houston 1973) 5, et *alibi*. Laidlaw (supra n.6) had also insisted that the Trinity was the model in these phrases for distinct, human personalities, 170.

<sup>8</sup> See for example *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, R.L. Harris, G.L. Archer, B.K. Waltke edd. (Chicago 1980) v.1, 438.

a multiplicity of human beings who, though sharing the same *type* essence, do not actually share *the same essence* in the way that the Trinity do.<sup>9</sup> Besides the obvious point that Man is not, nor will he ever be truly comparable to God, there is another very good reason for the disjunction between the individual “essences” of separate human beings: we shall all have to make our own individual choice about whether to answer God’s call to follow and serve Him, and those who choose to reject Him will ultimately be separated from Him *and from us* (yielding a separation in human essences that could not nor will ever obtain in the case of the divine essence).

The Hebrew word translated “image” in Genesis 1:26-27 above is *tselem* (לם); its Greek counterpart, also meaning “image” (as used in the Septuagint and New Testament), is *eikon* (εικων). Both *tselem* and *eikon* refer to Man’s spiritual mirroring of God’s essence. Although it is possible, as some have argued, that *tselem* is to be derived from *tsel* (ל), “shade” (and that the connection between the words would be felt by the Hebrew reader in any case), in scripture *tselem* means “image” in a fairly concrete sense; the word is often used for statues of pagan idols which, after all, are meant to be exact replicas of the god in question.<sup>10</sup> On this analogy (transferred to the spiritual realm), the image of God would seem to be a very clear reflection of His Sovereignty: Man acts for God (in paradise) and even *as God* in certain instances. God made us to serve Him, therefore when we are behaving properly we are indeed acting in His stead. We are *el* (לא), a “small g” image of *the* God (*'elohiym*: יהוה) “God with a capital G” (although in the Hebrew it is a question of a singular noun in the first instance, versus a plural “of majesty” used for God Himself in the second).

I said, “You are gods, and sons of the Most High, all of you.” However, you shall die in the manner of Man, and fall like any other [human] prince.  
Psalm 82:6

Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law: ‘I said, You are gods?’”  
John 10:34

It makes perfect sense, therefore, to find this analogy of creatures called “mighty ones” (i.e., “gods”) applied to the angels as well as to mankind, because by His delegation they too share in the authority of God (*the* Mighty One):<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Part 1 Bible Basics: Theology: The Study God, section II, “The Persons of God: the Trinity”.

<sup>10</sup> e.g., 2Kng.11:18; Ezek.7:20; Rev. 13:14ff. This point can be clearly seen from Heb.10:1, where *eikon* (as something fairly precise: the good realities to come) is specifically distinguished from the “shadows” of the law.

<sup>11</sup> Additionally, angels (like men) are called the “sons of God” (Gen.6:1-4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps.29:1; 89:6-7).

I will praise You with all my heart. Before the angels (lit. “*the gods*”) I will sing of You.  
Psalm 138:1

Everyone who serves an idol will be put to shame, all those who praise images. Worship Him, all you angels (lit. “*gods*”).  
Psalm 97:7

What is Man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him? ***You made him a little lower than the angels*** (lit. “*the gods*”), you crowned him with glory and honor. ***You made him sovereign*** over all the works of your hands. You put everything under his feet, flocks and all cattle, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the skies and the fish of the sea, and whatever swims the paths of the seas.  
Psalm 8: 4-8

This last passage, Psalm 8:4-8, is particularly apropos of our study because it provides a link between men and angels as God’s delegates here on earth. The angels are described as “mighty ones”, “gods” with a small “g”, while Man, we are told, has been made “a little lower” than these entirely spiritual creatures who were the first to enjoy God’s delegated sovereignty. Nevertheless, it is ***Man who has now been made sovereign*** (as God’s representative) over the earth and everything that God has created on the earth (***in place of earth’s original angelic sovereign, Satan*** as we know from other scriptures such as Is.14:12-20 and Ezek.28:12-19).<sup>12</sup>

Now it is true that mankind fell (corporately, or “positionally”) in Adam (Rom.5:12-21; 1Cor.15:21-22). It is also true that, as a result of Adam’s fall, Satan is the present “ruler of the world” (Lk.4:6; Jn.12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1Jn.5:19). But the devil’s usurped sovereignty has never gone and will never go unchallenged by God (Gen.3:15; Rev.20:10). God has used (and continues to use) the sons of men to challenge the devil’s temporary sovereignty which was destroyed positionally (i.e., in principle) by the Son of God in His victory on the cross (Is.42:3-4; Matt.12:20; 1Cor.15:54-57; Col.2:15; 1Jn.5:3-5) and will be destroyed experientially (i.e., in practice) at His return (Ps.110:1; Rev.19:11-21). For it is Christ who is the ***exact image*** of the Father (Heb.1:3). And it is Christ who will rule over the earth in complete and perfect sovereignty as delegated by the Father (Is.9:6-7) until all His enemies have been crushed and the kingdom can be handed over to the Father (1Cor.15:24-28). Then we shall witness the Father’s unchallenged rule over the new heavens and earth where “righteousness dwells” (2Pet.3:13), where there shall no longer be the slightest trace of evil (Rev.21:8; 22:3).

Psalm 8 thus describes Man acting properly in his capacity as a true servant of God, ministering in God’s creation according to God’s will. So it is not at all surprising to discover that this passage finds its ultimate prophetic fulfillment in the Last Adam, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

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<sup>12</sup> See Parts 1&2 of this series: [Satan's Rebellion and Fall](#) and [The Genesis Gap](#) respectively.

For it is not to angels that He subordinated the world to come (which is our present topic), but someone testifies at some point saying, “What is Man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honor. You made him sovereign over all the works of your hands, you put everything under his feet.” For in subordinating the world to him, He left nothing that was not subordinate to him. However, we do not now yet see the world in subordination to him. But we do now see Jesus crowned with glory and honor on account of the death He suffered, even Him who became “a little lower than the angels” [for a brief span] so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of us all.  
Hebrews 2:5-9

All of the scriptures just considered refer to the idea we have discussed above, namely that the central point of the image of God in Man is ***the ability to exercise and respond to authority***, to act sovereignly in God’s place where He so delegates, and to be responsible to Him for our actions.<sup>13</sup> This key characteristic of spirit requires other obvious mental and spiritual aspects and assets (such as self-consciousness, mentality, conscience, etc.). But just as the sovereignty of God is the coordinating characteristic of His perfect character,<sup>14</sup> so the ability to judge and govern, and to be morally responsible (in terms of our own lives along with whatever God places in our charge) is the key quality of comparison between the essence of God and the essence of Man, between God as archetype and Man as His image:

Then God said, “Let us make Man in our image, according to our likeness, ***so that he may rule .....***”  
Genesis 1:26a

The Hebrew word translated “likeness” in Genesis 1:26 above is *demuth* (tvmd); its Greek counterpart, also meaning “likeness” (as used in the Septuagint and New Testament) is *homoioma* or *homoiosis* (ὁμοιωμα, ὁμοιωσις). Both *demuth* and *homoioma/homoiosis* refer not to our common mirroring of God’s essence, but to the fact that we have an individual responsibility to seek, follow and serve God.<sup>15</sup> “Likeness” then refers to mankind’s multiplicity in terms of many, unique and individual personalities. In this point, by analogy, we parallel the persons of Trinity (though even more loosely than we parallel His essence-image for the reasons

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Princeton 1871) v.2, 99, says of Man “he is a spirit, an intelligent, voluntary agent; and as such he is rightfully invested with universal dominion”.

<sup>14</sup> See Part 1 Bible Basics: Theology: The Study God, section I.B.4, “God is Sovereign”.

<sup>15</sup> For example, James 3:9 uses *homoiosis* for “likeness of God” because mankind in general (i.e., a generic plurality) is in view. This also explains why in Genesis 1:27 we have only “creating Adam in God’s image” while making Man in the “likeness of God” is not repeated: only Adam is created at that time, not the entire human race.

discussed above). The fact that the pronouns in Genesis 1:26 are plural (“Us”, “our image”) makes it very difficult to exclude the Trinity from this passage.<sup>16</sup> We share the image of God on an overall essence basis, but the likeness of God relates to the fact that just as the Trinity is “We”, so mankind is composed of *many different members*, each of whom shares the image of God (and the corresponding *individual* responsibility to seek, follow and serve Him). Although it is possible, as some have argued, that *demuth* is to be derived from *dam* (.d), “blood” (and that the connection between the words would be felt by the Hebrew reader in any case, and also with the words *'adam*, Adam, and *'adamah*, ground), in scripture *demuth* means “likeness” with no demonstrable connection to this admittedly important term and concept. It is also important to remember that the point of analogy for the likeness of God is the threefold personality of God, and that this point of comparison is *entirely spiritual in every way*.

This is the account of the generations of Man: Throughout the period (lit., “day”) when God was creating Man, He made him (i.e., mankind) in His likeness. He created them male and female and He blessed them and He called their name “Man” on the day He created them. Now Adam lived 130 years and he fathered [a son] *in his likeness, according to his image*, and he named him Seth.

Genesis 5:1-3

The “day” or period discussed here includes not only the original creation of Adam and Eve but also all the time which has passed since as the phrase “the account of the *generations* of Man” makes clear. Therefore, as a summary statement which includes both original creation and the subsequent procreation of mankind (i.e., the “generations of Man” wherein every human being is given life by God; see section II.3 below, “The Human Spirit”), the phrase in Genesis 5:1, “He made [mankind] *in His likeness*”, can be explained as a deliberate conflation of the dual phrase used in Genesis 1:26 “in our image, according to our likeness. This technique is no doubt used by Moses because more than the original man, Adam, are in view (so that the focus naturally shifts to the multiplicity of mankind, but with the “in” retained to recall the essential free will each individual possesses; note that in Gen.9:6 where the case is individual it is again *in His image*). And also in the case of verse three here, the wording, far from being a crux of interpretation on account of the reversal of the prepositions used with image and likeness (*be* and *ce*, “in” and “according to” respectively), actually helps to confirm the points just expressed. The critical distinction between Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 5:3, quoted immediately above, is that the *subjects* of the two passages are entirely different: in Genesis 1:26-27, the subject is *God*; in Genesis 5:3, the subject is *Adam*. Obviously, a comparison based on an analogy with Man will of necessity be quite different from one based on an analogy with God. This fact accounts for the reversal whereby we have in Genesis 5:3 “*in his likeness*” and “*according to his image*”. Between a man and a man, “likeness” or individuality is exactly parallel: all of us are human beings (contrasted with the comparison of Man to God in Gen.1:26). However in terms of “image”, when comparing man to man, the comparison becomes less exact here, because now we are not contrasting divine essence to similar (in principle) human essence, but we are instead

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<sup>16</sup> As Laidlaw points out so effectively: 1895 [n.6. supra] 168ff.

comparing a whole man (body and spirit) to another complete person: without question Adam and Seth, though similar in terms of species, were at the same time very different, even to the naked eye (not to mention the differences of mind, emotion, aptitude -- all the factors that make for differences in personality). Reversing “in” and “according to” is the only way to make clear, based on the pattern set in Genesis 1:26, this distinction between the “man to man” image-likeness relationship on the one hand, and the “Man to God” image-likeness relationship on the other.

We have already seen that mankind has been created for the glory of God (section I.3 above). While this glorification of God is primarily accomplished by what He does for us (most especially in the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ on our behalf), we too have a role to play through the exercise of our will here on earth. Our image and likeness to God, that is, our self-determination and separateness, our ability to choose for God and the individual responsibility to do so, our limited sovereignty and its common disbursement (to a greater or lesser degree) to all members of our species, are aspects of spirit without which it would be impossible for us to participate in this glorification process (otherwise known as human history). Simply put, God is glorified by our obedience, by our response to *His* sovereign authority. Our will is not really “free” in the sense that we can choose the course of our lives without consequence. We really have only one choice: obey God. If we do, God is glorified by our obedience. If we do not, we suffer the consequences (and God still enjoys a measure of glory by dealing with us in justice, though He would have preferred to deal with us in love). No, we really do not have “free will” in the overarching sense of the phrase. Either we choose to do God’s will, or we end up choosing to follow the present “ruler of this world” by default (Gal.5:16-17). Either we accept His sovereign authority over our lives, an authority He possesses by nature of being God, an authority He has underlined to an unimaginable degree by the price He has paid for us through the death of His only Son, or we reject Him for the usurped authority of the devil’s world (1Jn.2:15-17). If we seek Him, if we follow Him, if we serve Him, *if we obey Him*, we will find that in our lives, in our spiritual gifts, in the production that flows from the ministries He assigns, we will be partakers in the delegated sovereign authority of God that was bestowed upon Adam so long ago. But instead of ruling over the perfection of Eden, our task is to manifest the glory of God by contesting whatever part of this battlefield called earth that the Lord has assigned to us. Whatever the spiritual gift, whatever the ministry, whatever the effect God has granted us, these are spheres of God’s delegated sovereignty every bit as significant as Adam’s charge over Eden. We serve at His pleasure, in His might and for His glory, demonstrating God’s power at work in our hearts here on this alien domain, once the devil’s charge (but spurned), once Adam’s charge (but lost), now the arena wherein some of Adam’s fallen seed *do* choose for God – because He first chose us – rejecting the devil’s authority, accepting God’s sovereignty, and glorifying Him in Jesus Christ.

Thus Man, as a replacement for Satan and the fallen angels, had to have the image and likeness of God, i.e., he had to be capable on an individual basis of *exercising authority* (as delegated by God) in order to reflect His glory by acting as His faithful steward (in place of the rebellious usurper: Eph.2:2), and of *responding to* divine authority (through faith in Christ after the fall).

Since His victory at the cross, Christ is now our immediate authority, our “head”, all power and authority on heaven and earth having been granted to Him (Matt.28:18; Col.2:10; cf. Matt.9:6; Jn.5:27; 17:2; Eph.2:20-22):

Any man praying or prophesying with [hair] hanging down from his head dishonors his Head (i.e., Christ: cf. v.3). And any woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered (i.e., hair torn and unkempt as a sign of mourning) dishonors her head (i.e., husband: cf. v.3). For then she is one and the same with her who has been shaved [as a sign of disgrace]. So if a woman is not keeping her hair in order [through styling, pinning, braiding, etc.], let her be shorn. And if it is a shameful thing for a woman to be shorn or shaved [and it is], then let her wear her hair properly arranged. For a man ought not to wear adorned hair [an effeminate mark of submission] since he is the **image and glory** of God. A woman, on the other hand, is the glory of her husband.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:5-7

And everyone of us, if we reflect the Lord’s glory with no “veil” obscuring our faces (i.e., with unsullied Christian witness), is being transformed **into the same image** (i.e., become more Christ-like) so as to reflect an ever greater degree of glory – exactly what is to be expected with the Lord’s Spirit as the agent of our transformation.

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:18

A comparison of the use of the word “image” in the two passages above reveals an apparent (though only apparent) contradiction: in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:7, Man still bears the image, while in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:18, the fact that we Christians should be in the process of being transformed into “the same image” has seemed to many to suggest that we do not at present possess the image of God (or at least that it has been marred in some way, and so needs to be repaired).<sup>17</sup> The root cause advanced for this putative “defacing” or “erasing” of the image of God is Adam’s fall. But at the heart of all such theories is inevitably the misconception that the image (usually undistinguished from the likeness) is, at least in part, related to the body of Adam. In fact, as we have argued above, both the image and the likeness of God are entirely spiritual.<sup>18</sup> Since the fall, our bodies have become subject to corruption and infected by sin, but our spirits retain the same two critical facets bestowed upon them by God on the sixth day of re-creation: 1) the capability of exercising and responding to authority (“image”), and 2) the responsibility for our own individual personalities (“likeness”). 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:7 clearly states that Man is still the “image and glory” of God (exercising and responding to God’s delegated authority as appropriate). And on closer examination, moreover, it becomes clear that 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:18 is talking about something quite different. In that passage the “same image” which we as Christians are being enjoined to emulate is **that of Christ** (cf. Eph.4:24; Col.3:10). Christ is the

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<sup>17</sup> See L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids 1949) 202-210, for a thorough synopsis of the varying views on this subject.

<sup>18</sup> See section I.3 below.

*exact* image of the Father (Heb.1:3), and our ultimate role model who followed the Father's will in perfect obedience (e.g., Matt.16:24; 1Cor.11:1). The "image and likeness" which is our common heritage as human beings is spiritual – but we are born in sin (Rm.7:18 & 24). As human beings, we have the potential to seek, follow and serve God, to willingly strive to transform ourselves into His Christ-like followers, but this requires obedience and response to God's authority in first believing in and then following Jesus Christ. Only in this way can we fulfill the potential of His "image and likeness" and bring the glory to God for which He created us, then *re-created* us in Jesus Christ (Jn.3:3).<sup>19</sup>

2. The Creation of Adam: The overview of the creation of Man (Adam and Eve) in Genesis 1:26-27, therefore, deals with general principles: 1) we are all made in the *image* of God (i.e., we share an identical type of spiritual essence whose most salient feature is our ability to understand, exercise and respond to authority for the purpose of being obedient and faithful stewards of God on earth, living and working for Jesus Christ); 2) we are all made in the *likeness* of God (i.e., we are all unique personalities with an individual responsibility to respond to God's authority). In Genesis 2:7, however, we find a more detailed description of the actual event of God's creation of the first human being, Adam.<sup>20</sup>

And the Lord God formed the man (i.e., Adam's body) from the dust of the ground, then blew into his nostrils the life-giving breath (i.e., his spirit), and [thus] the man became a living person.  
Genesis 2:7

It is important that we have this description of Adam's creation in addition to the Genesis 1:26-27 passage, for while that first passage tells us about Man's *spirit*, this verse describes for us the creation of Adam's *body* and God's quickening of that body by infusing it with a human spirit.

The agent of Adam's creation is "the Lord God" (*yvhv`elohiym*: ,yhvla hvhy). Although all three members of the Trinity are called Lord, the Father's representative and agent of creation is our Lord, Jesus Christ, the very one who has been chosen to lead the fight against the devil and ultimately to replace Satan as world ruler (Jn.1:3; Col.1:16; Heb.1:2).<sup>21</sup> When He does, it will be as the God-Man, a genuine human being, body and spirit, in eternal union with undiminished deity. God's creation of a body for Adam, the first member of the species that was to replace

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<sup>19</sup> The common human potential for seeking God is taught, for example, in Eccl.3:11; Ps.19:1-4; Acts 17:26-27; Rom.1:19-20; 2:14-16.

<sup>20</sup> Genesis 2:4 is a summary of the seven days of re-creation; Genesis 2:5 begins this more detailed account (contra NIV et al.). See part 2 of this series, The Genesis Gap.

<sup>21</sup> See Part 1 of Bible Basics: Theology: The Study God, section II, C: "The Trinity in the Old Testament". For the roles of the Trinity in creation, see part 2 of this series, The Genesis Gap, section III: Creation and Re-Creation.



Satan and his followers, must have sent a seismic shock through the diabolical rank and file, given the importance of possessing bodies in the Satanic platform.<sup>22</sup> In fact, everything in this passage emphasizes the true materiality of Adam's body: 1) he is created from the dust (or loose dirt), emphasizing his material origin; 2) he is "formed" (the Hebrew verb *yatsar*, רָצַץ), emphasizing the plastic nature of the process and often used of the potter at work (e.g., Is.29:16); 3) the very name Adam (*'adham*, אָדָם) is closely related to the name for ground (*'adhamah*, אֲדָמָה), emphasizing the man's close connection with the earth from which he was made.

Significantly, the material, plastic, earth-connected creation of the body, in and of itself, *does not* result in life – life occurs only after the Lord God puts a "living spirit" into the newly formed body. Moreover, it is only as a result of God's breathing of a human spirit (the "breath of life", i.e., "life-giving breath") into the first man, that Adam becomes a "living person". This process, observed by angels and recorded for all of Adam's posterity, makes it abundantly clear that 1) Adam is both a spiritual *and* a material being; 2) neither the human spirit nor the human body is meant to exist without the other:

For just as ***the body without the spirit is dead***, so also faith without works is dead.  
James 2:26

For we know that if our earthly tent-dwelling (i.e., our physical body) be struck, we have an abode [that comes] from God, a dwelling made without human agency, eternal in the heavens. For indeed we do groan in this one, desiring to put on our habitation which comes from heaven. And even if we do put off this present one, ***we will not be found naked*** (i.e., our spirits will not be "body-less" at death because we shall receive an interim body ; cf. Ps.141:8).  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:1-3

3. The Human Spirit: Adam's creation serves as the pattern for us all. It goes without saying that our bodies are now formed indirectly through natural procreation, not directly by the immediate creation of God. Nevertheless, the pattern of body formed first, life-giving spirit introduced by the Lord later, obtains now as it did with the creation of the first man:

The God who created the world and everything in it, this is He who as Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made by human hands nor is He tended to by the hands of men – as if He were in need of anything – He it is who ***gives life and breath*** and everything else to all [of us].  
Acts 17:24-25

The passage above is reminiscent of Adam's creation. Working backward in the process of creation, in Acts 17:24-25 Paul enumerates the same three elements in God's construction of Man that are found at Genesis 2:7:

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<sup>22</sup> See part 1 of this series, Satan's Rebellion and Fall, IV, 3, b.

- 1) life (the living person – life resulting from the fusion of body and spirit occasioned by God’s implantation of the human spirit into our bodies at birth).
- 2) breath (i.e., the human spirit).
- 3) everything else (i.e., our bodies and what is necessary to sustain them in the world).

Most important for the purposes of our current discussion is that just as it was at Genesis 2:7, so in the Acts 17:24-25 passage “life” is the result of God’s gift of “breath” (i.e., a human spirit). Only after God places the human spirit into the body does life occur, and apart from this infusion of spirit, there is no life. Other passages of scripture confirm that human life is the result of God’s imparting of a human spirit, without which the body would be dead:

1) The human spirit is given by God:

Then [at death] the dust (i.e., the body) will return to the earth whence it came, and the spirit will return to **God who gave it**.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

Thus says God the Lord, who creates the skies and stretches them out, who fashions the earth and its produce, **who gives breath** to the people upon it, even **a spirit** to those who walk upon it.

Isaiah 42:5

2) The human spirit’s entrance into the body results in life:

Thus says the Lord God to these bones, “Behold, I am about to **put a spirit into you so that you may come to life**. And I shall place sinews on you, lay flesh upon you, and put skin over you. And I shall **put a spirit into you so that you may come to life** and know that I am the Lord.

Ezekiel 37:5-6

Then He (Jesus) took [the dead child’s] hand and spoke to her, saying, “Child, wake up!” Then **her spirit returned** [to her], and she immediately got up.

Luke 8:54-55a

And after the three and one half days, **a living spirit from God** entered into [the bodies of the two witnesses who had been slain by the beast], and they stood up on their feet.

Revelation 11:11

3) The human spirit’s exit from the body results in death:

If [God] should so purpose in His heart, and gather **His spirit and breath** to Himself, then **all flesh would expire** together, and Man would return to the dust.

Job 34:14-15

Then Jesus shouted out again in a loud voice and *exhaled His spirit*.  
Matthew 27:50

Then they began to stone Stephen while he called out and said “Lord Jesus, *receive my spirit*.”  
Acts 7:59

The Hebrew words used for the human spirit are *ruach* (רוּחַ), literally “wind”, and *neshamah* (נְשָׁמָה), literally “breath”. The Greek word for the human spirit is *pneuma* (πνεῦμα), used for both wind and breath. A point that Hebrew *ruach* and Greek *pneuma* have in common is that, in addition to the human spirit, they are also used in scripture to refer to the Holy Spirit or to literal wind, a fact that makes even more sense than is apparent at first glance as we shall see below in section II.4 “Dichotomy”. What is clear at this juncture is that wind and breath are largely invisible phenomena, though both are very real phenomena. Breath-wind thus makes a perfect analogy for the immaterial, unseen part of Man which quickens the body and results in life upon implantation, that is, the human spirit:

a) The human spirit is who we are: The human spirit is more than just a life-force that animates the body; the human spirit is essentially “who we are”. Our will and self-determination, our conscience, our understanding and mentality, our consciousness and self-consciousness are, while not independent of the body, essentially aspects of the particular, individual human spirit that is us. Below is a list of scripture passages touching on the human spirit in its facets, qualities and functions. Taken together, they paint a vivid picture of what the human spirit is in the Bible, namely our “inner person”, the real “us”. The spirit is the place of

*conscience*: The spirit of Man is the Lord’s lamp, searching out the inner chambers of his heart. Proverbs 20:27

*reflection*: For who among men knows the things of Man except the spirit of Man within him? 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:11a

*perception*: And Jesus, immediately recognizing in His spirit that they were reasoning thus to themselves, replied to them. Mark 2:8

*refreshment*: And in my encouragement, I rejoiced all the more over the joy Titus felt because his spirit was refreshed by all of you. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 7:13

*wisdom*: But there is a spirit in Man, even the breath of the Almighty which gives him understanding. Job 32:8

*willingness*: The spirit is eager (i.e., to do God’s will), but the flesh is weak (i.e., so as not to follow through). Matthew 26:41

- volition:* After these things had occurred, Paul determined in his spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaea, then proceed to Jerusalem. Acts 19:21a
- intellect:* For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how I continually make mention of you ... Romans 1:9
- personality:* [For I have already decided,] in the name of our Lord Jesus, when all of you are gathered together with my spirit by the power of our Lord Jesus, to hand such a one over to Satan for the destruction of his body so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:4-5
- mentality:* For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my [fleshly] mind is unproductive. What should I do then? I shall pray with my spirit, but also with my mind. I shall sing [praises to God] with my spirit, but also with my mind. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:14-15
- growth:* [You have been taught to] put off according to your previous behavior the old Man, the one that is being destroyed by deceptive lusts, and instead to be re-made in the spirit of your mind, and [so] to put on the new Man, the one that is created in righteousness and sanctity of the truth according to God's standards. Ephesians 4:23-24
- understanding:* For the Spirit Himself testifies to our spirit that we are God's children. Romans 8:16
- worship:* For God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit (i.e., the human spirit responding to the Holy Spirit) and in truth. John 4:24
- blessing:* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philippians 4:23

When we die, our bodies return to the ground, but, as believers in Jesus Christ, our spirits (i.e., *we ourselves*) enter into the presence of God (cf. Rev.7:9ff.), temporarily clothed with an interim body (2Cor.5:3 [Greek]; Rev.6:11), to await resurrection and their (i.e., *our*) entrance into a new, permanent and highly superior home, the "resurrection body".<sup>23</sup> That the spirit so housed is really "us" is clear from Jesus' story of Lazarus and the rich man (though the pre-cross believers in the story have now been transferred to the third heaven: see Part 1 of this series). In Luke 16:19-31, we see an Abraham, *Abraham's spirit*, who though temporarily clothed in this pre-resurrection state seems in every aspect to be just as he was in life (except without toil and tears). This is also true of Lazarus, and even the rich man (except for the torments he now endures). The loss of our bodies will not change the essential facts of who we are, and, since God made us as creatures who possess both spirit *and* body, we will never be "naked" (i.e., without any covering for the spirit: 2Cor.5:3), and the day will come when we shall receive our eternal body

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<sup>23</sup> See Peter #20 for a detailed development of this doctrine.

for which we so eagerly hope (Rom.8:23). Our bodies are important (1Cor.6:13), but rather than **being** who we are, they are more properly **tools** for who we are, that is, for the use of our spirits to be employed in the service of God for His glory which is our purpose (cf. Rom.6:20; 2Tim.2:20-21):

Therefore I entreat you by God's mercy, brothers, to dedicate **your bodies** as a living sacrifice, well-pleasing to God – [this is] **your** “priestly-service” spiritually performed.  
Romans 12:1

Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you (whom you have from God), and that you don't belong to yourselves? You were bought at a price. So glorify God **with your body**.  
1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:20

Don't you know that all the runners in the stadium run the race, but that only one receives the prize? Run in such a way so as to achieve what you are after. And again, everyone involved in competition exercises self-control in all respects. Those athletes go through such things so that they may receive a perishable crown of victory, but we do it to receive an imperishable one. So as I run this race of ours, I'm heading straight for the finish line; and as I box this bout of ours, I'm making every punch count. I'm “**pummeling my body**”, one might say, bringing myself under strict control so that, after having preached [the gospel] to others, I might not myself be disqualified [from receiving the prize we all seek].  
1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:24-27

For we must all stand before Christ's tribunal, so that each of us may receive recompense for what he has accomplished **through this body**, whether it be good or worthless.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:10

For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision that comes from the Spirit of Jesus Christ, in keeping with my expectation and hope that I will in no way be put to shame, but that now as ever, holding nothing back, Christ will be magnified **by means of this body of mine**, whether through my life, or through my death.  
Philippians 1:20

After the fall of Adam and its consequent corruption, however, the body often influences the spirit (i.e., “us”) for ill. So, as believers in Christ, we find ourselves caught between the body's (now) pernicious influence and the divine influence of the Holy Spirit. Our spirits (i.e., “we”) thus face the choice in this life of whether to follow the Holy Spirit in service of God the Father and Jesus Christ our Lord, or instead to give in to the desires, cravings and lusts of our sinful bodies:

The Spirit is what gives life. The flesh doesn't benefit you at all.

John 6:63

Don't offer up your [bodily] members to sin as weapons of unrighteousness. But rather offer yourselves up to God as those now alive from the dead, and [offer up] your [bodily] members to God as weapons of righteousness.

Romans 6:13

I know that nothing good dwells in me – that is, in my flesh. For to will what is good lies in my power, but to carry it out does not.

Romans 7:18

So then, brothers, we are under obligation – but not to the flesh to live by its rules. For if you are living by the rules of the flesh, you are destined to die. But if by the Spirit you are putting to death the practices of the body, you will live.

Romans 8:12-13

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans for carrying out the lusts of the flesh.

Romans 13:14

But I tell you, walk in the Spirit and you will not carry out what the flesh lusts for. For what the flesh lusts for is contrary to the Spirit's will, and the Spirit is opposed to what the flesh desires. Since these are diametrically opposed to each other in this way, what you are doing is not what you yourself choose.

Galatians 5:16-17

b) The human spirit is created by God: In six days, God re-established and refurbished the heavens and the earth. But the seventh day of rest is not to be interpreted to mean that from this point forward, God no longer creates, only allowing (as some would have it) His creation to roll along entirely on its own momentum. Our Lord, speaking about His own miracles (performed on the seventh day) addressed this matter directly:

Then Jesus answered them, "My Father is working right up until this present day. And I am working too".

John 5:17

The human spirit is **not** passed down biologically through natural procreation (traducianism), **nor** was it "pre-made" in eternity past, then deposited in a heavenly storehouse for later implantation (pre-existence). The human spirit is the immediate creation of God (creationism):

Then they fell upon their faces and said, "O God, **God of the spirits** of all flesh (i.e., mankind), shall one man sin, and will you be angry with the entire congregation?"

Numbers 16:22

For I will not contend eternally, nor will I be angry forever. For [Man's] spirit would faint away before Me, even his breaths (i.e., human spirits) **which I have made**.  
Isaiah 57:16

Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth, who **forms Man's spirit within him**.  
Zechariah 12:1b

I charge you before **God who gives life to all things** . . .  
1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:13a

At that time we had those who fathered our flesh to discipline us, and we respected them. Shall we not all the more submit ourselves to the **Father of our spirits** and live?  
Hebrews 12:9

The immediate creation of the human spirit by God at birth untainted by the corruption of the flesh along with its close affinity to the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom.8:16) give us every reason to suppose that, analogous to the Holy Spirit, the human spirit is entirely spiritual exactly as its name suggests. For the Greek word for Spirit and spirit in both of these cases is identical (*pneuma*, πνεύμα). This principle of essential spirituality can also be seen in the introspective function or “consciousness” of the human spirit (likewise analogous to the role of the perceptual Holy Spirit):

For who among men knows the things of Man except the spirit of Man within him? In just the same way no one has known the things of God except the Spirit of God.  
1st Corinthians 2:11

c) The human spirit is implanted by God at birth: Adam, of course, was not born.<sup>24</sup> His body was formed by the Lord from the dust of the ground. Immediately thereafter, the Lord breathed into his nostrils the “life-giving breath”, and as a result of this implantation of the human spirit, Adam became “a living person”. After our first parents, however, it is physical birth that has been the means of producing and providing bodies for us all. So it is that physical birth forms the first of the two natural termini of human life that scripture takes for granted from Genesis to Revelation (Gen.4:1; Job 3:11; Eccl.3:2; 7:1; Rev.12:2).<sup>25</sup> Therefore birth is for us what the Lord's formation of Adam's body was for him, that is, the point at which our life begins, when the Lord breathes into us our human spirit. The case of the first Adam (our common forefather) was unique; he is the only person whose body was formed by the Lord from the dust of the ground. In the case of the last Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, the taking on of true

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<sup>24</sup> Eve's body too was formed by the Lord (from one of Adam's ribs). See section II.5 below.

<sup>25</sup> The other, of course, being physical death (the natural consequence of the fall of Adam).

humanity by undiminished deity is the most unique event that has ever transpired in the history of the universe. His conception was also unique, for He was virgin born by the power of the Holy Spirit. But He came to share in our humanity so as to rescue us from the common fate of wrath that was our lot through our descent from Adam, and so His birth was after the pattern which we all have in common. He entered the world in the manner of us all, that is, by normal human birth and the reception of a genuine human spirit at birth (cf. Ps.22:9-10):

Therefore as [Jesus Christ] was coming into the world (i.e., at His birth) He said, “You [Father] did not desire sacrifice or offering, but you *have* prepared a body for Me”.  
Hebrews 10:5

At that time (i.e., His birth) He [Jesus Christ in His deity] said, “Behold, I have arrived (i.e., been born) – in the scroll of a book it is written of Me – to do your will, O God”.  
Hebrews 10:7

Though His body was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ entered the world when we all do: at birth.<sup>26</sup> This explains why at Matthew 1:20-21 the angel can tell Joseph “that which has been engendered in her is from the Holy Spirit, and she *will* give birth to a Son”, and why at Luke 1:35 Gabriel can tell Mary “the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for this very reason that which is going to be born *will* be called holy, the Son of God”. Both the grammar of these passages (Greek neuters: “that which”) and the prophecies here which are both primarily concerned with the *birth* of Christ (as is the case of all the Messianic prophecies; cf. Jdg.13:7; Is.7:14; 9:6-7; Lk.1:15), make it clear that it is not His conception, but His birth that is our Lord’s point of entrance into the world after the pattern by which we have all entered it: the physical birth of our bodies followed by God’s breathing into us of our human spirit. The star of Bethlehem and the angelic chorus that herald His arrival are celebrating not His conception but His birth (Lk.2:8-20), the point when He first drew breath as a human being (albeit the only divine One: Phil.2:6-7; Heb.2:14), for that is the point at which the Father brought His Son “into the world”:

And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”  
Hebrews 1:6 NIV

The Spirit of God made me, and the breath of the Almighty gave me life.

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<sup>26</sup> This is not at all to imply that for this reason the fetus has no worth in God’s eyes. Quite to the contrary, the unborn are highly valued in scripture (Ex.21:22; Job 10:8-12; Ps.139:13-16; Is.44:24; 49:4-5). Further we may note that in the Bible children are considered a great blessing (cf. 1Sam.2:1-11 and Lk.1:46-55), with infertility seen as a curse (Hos.9:14; cf. Gen.38; Lev.20:20-21; 1Sam.1:11), and pregnancy as a blessing and occasionally even a means of vindication (cf. Num.5:11-31 and Lk.1:25). Whereas, on the other hand, the sacrifice of children is an abomination (Lev.18:21; Deut.12:31; 18:10; Ps.106:37-38).



So once again we return to the analogy of breath, a function of our physical life that only occurs after birth and ends with death. Breath, a manifestation of physical life which (while not synonymous with it) is coterminous with that life, is therefore the perfect symbol and analogy for the life that begins at birth, when God puts our human spirit into our body. This is why Jesus, to explain our need for eternal life, told us we must be *born again*, not “conceived again”, for birth is the point where life begins by means of an act of God, whether it be the first or the second birth (Jn.3:3).<sup>27</sup>

Thus it is the human spirit (eternal if we follow Christ to eternal life) that is all-important, not this flesh that profits nothing because it will not long endure in its present form. But the body is the battleground whereon this battle we wage against the “principalities and powers” of Satan is being fought out (Eph.6:12). We have seen that the human spirit (i.e., “we”) will of necessity follow either the sinful flesh (influenced by the devil’s world and all that is in it) or the Holy Spirit, but in order to grasp the mechanics of this process, we must first consider a subject that we have so far deliberately avoided: the so-called “soul”.

4. The Dichotomy of Man: In non-technical (and non-scriptural) discussions of this sort, the word “soul” is often employed much in the same sense in which we have used “[human] spirit” above. Probably no concept has been responsible for greater misunderstanding of what the Bible actually has to say about the constitution of Man (“anthropology” in most systematic theological treatments) than that of the soul as a supposed *third element* in that constitution. According to a proper understanding of the scriptures, Man is *not* a trichotomous being (i.e., tripartite, composed of body, soul and spirit), but rather a dichotomous one (body and spirit being the only two *discrete* elements of his nature).

a) Definition and Etymology: The word “soul” is of Germanic extraction, part of our common Anglo-Saxon heritage that forms the oldest stratum of the English language. All other things being equal, “soul”, our word for something spiritual, immaterial and animating, would not be a bad translation for the Greek *pneuma* or the Hebrew *ruach* (both of which we have translated as “spirit” above). The problem is that while “soul” could be a synonym for the human spirit, it most definitely is *not an additional element* in Man’s constitution.

When the Lord first breathed a human spirit into Adam’s newly formed body, the result was that he became a “living *being*” (Gen.2:7). But beginning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C., the Hebrew word *nephesh* (נפש - properly translated “being” above) began to be translated into a very loose Greek equivalent: *psyche* (ψυχη). The task of rendering this particular Hebrew word into Greek was, to be sure, not a simple one. Ancient Greek notions of “anthropology” (the human constitution) were flexible, to say the least. But *psyche* was a particularly unfortunate choice, because the

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<sup>27</sup> For more detail on the principle of the new birth, see Peter #19.

word much more closely patterns what we should call the human spirit.<sup>28</sup> This initial precedent was then perpetuated throughout the Septuagint, by and large, and then followed by the writers of the New Testament, who naturally built upon the conventions of their day. Understand, their words were most certainly written under divine inspiration – it is the subsequent *interpretation* of them with which we are here finding fault. And correct interpretation is not an issue as long as one realizes that *psyche* in the New Testament means the same thing as the Hebrew word *nephesh* (i.e., “being”, **not** soul or spirit). But most English versions incorrectly identify *psyche* as “soul”, taking their cue from Greek literature rather than from the Hebrew semantic exemplar. Worse to tell, these same versions also generally impute the error backwards, taking *nephesh* to mean “soul” as well, because it is translated by *psyche* in the New Testament! To be fair, the error is an ancient one, and the Latin Fathers who made use of Platonic and other philosophical distinctions (which have no place in biblical interpretation) often translate *psyche* as *animus* and *pneuma* as *anima*, that is, taking “soul” and “spirit” as “immaterial person” and “animating principle” respectively (which nearly **reverses** the true state of affairs). No matter how such concepts may appeal to us (because of our preconceived notions about possessing both a spirit *and* a soul), it is well to remember that the Bible needs to be our guide on these matters rather than conventional wisdom, no matter how comfortable. That said, we need to return briefly to Genesis 2:7 and reexamine the critical passage that divides true dichotomy from false trichotomy:

And the Lord God formed the man (i.e., Adam’s body) from the dust of the ground, then blew into his nostrils the life-giving breath (i.e., his spirit), and [thus] the man became a **living person** (*nephesh*).

Genesis 2:7

Two elements are clearly present here: 1) the body, formed from the earth; 2) the spirit, breathed into the body by the Lord. The **result** of the combination of body and spirit is that the first man “became a living *nephesh*” (the word we are translating “being” in contradistinction to the erroneous “soul”). Notice that the verse does **not** say that the Lord **also** created a soul/person as some third, distinct element. Quite the contrary. When the two true elements of Man’s constitution combine, **he** (i.e., in his entirety) becomes **a** soul/person (*nephesh*), so that beyond all argument, *nephesh* in this most critical of all anthropological passages represents the **whole person** (i.e., the combination of body and spirit into one living person, and not some third, discrete part). That is why where the word *nephesh* is used in the Old Testament, and where *psyche* is used in the New Testament, almost inevitably one can substitute “person” or “individual” or “self” (or some other personal pronoun) for these words which are often (misleadingly) translated “soul” (compare the K.J.V. renderings of the following: Prov.19:8; Is.32:6; Acts 7:14; 1Pet.3:20):

Any **person** (*nephesh*) who sins unintentionally . . .

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<sup>28</sup> When Odysseus visits the underworld in the tenth book of the *Odyssey*, for example, he and his men see the *psyche* of Achilles (among others).

Therefore, “soul” (*nephesh-psyche*) is the term used in the Bible to make clear that the whole person is in view. We are not just body, nor are we only spirit. As we have suggested above and shall revisit in greater detail immediately below, the human spirit is, at present, limited in its capabilities because of the limitations of our present bodies – it has to work *through* the sinful body (which is constantly struggling against the human spirit’s will). It stands to reason, then, that the writers of scripture would, more often than not, refer to people in terms of the whole person, in which case the word “soul” (*nephesh-psyche*) is often the term of choice, but it is critical to understand that by “soul”, the entire human being, body and spirit, is meant – the one thing that “soul” (*nephesh-psyche*) does **not** mean in scripture is the immaterial part of Man **exclusively**.<sup>29</sup>

This principle actually helps to clarify passages of scripture which are often erroneously taken as supportive of the trichotomist position:

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even to the point of being able **to divide the spirit from its earthly life** (lit., the *psyche* “soul”) and the marrow from its bones; [The Word] acts as a judge of the thoughts and intentions of our heart.

Hebrews 4:12

Just as the marrow cannot normally be separated from the bone without destroying life (especially from the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. perspective), so the spirit is, for all practical purposes, one with the life it enjoys in the body – only the Word of God, the most penetrating force in the world, could make such a distinction.

And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you **in every part**, and may your **spirit, life** (lit. *psyche* “soul”), **and body** be preserved **completely intact** and without blame at the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:23

“Life”, or “soul” is here sandwiched in between the spirit and the body, because “life” (or “soul”) is the result of body and spirit being combined by the Lord (Gen.2:7). Only in this union of spirit and body, complete and intact, can there be a “living soul”:

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<sup>29</sup> Generally speaking then, the word “spirit” refers to the “inner Man” (as opposed to the body), and “soul” to the whole person (a human spirit in a live body). The significant exception is when “soul” (*nephesh-psyche*) is used as a synonym for the “heart”, i.e., the whole person with and emphasis on the inner person as we are now constituted (i.e., pre-resurrection). See section II.4.c.

For this reason it has also been written of the first Adam: “The man became a living person (*psyche*, translating the Hebrew *nephesh*)”; [but] the last Adam[, Christ, became] a life-giving spirit.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:45

For Adam and for us, the body is *psychikon*, i.e., attuned to the “soul” or earthly “physical life” we now lead in these present bodies of corruption, but when we follow Christ in resurrection, it will be *pneumatikon*, i.e., attuned to the human spirit and to the eternal life that we shall live with Him forever. In the verses that precede and follow 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:45, Paul explains this principle, and so it is worth our while to quote the passage at length here:

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. The body sown is corruptible, the one raised incorruptible. The body sown is dishonorable, the one raised glorious. The body sown is weak, the one raised powerful. The body sown is ***suitied to physical life***, the one raised ***to spiritual life***. If there is a physical body (and there patently is), then there is also a spiritual one. For, so it has also been written: "Adam, the first man, became a ***physical being*** (*nephesh*), possessing life, but Christ, the last Adam, became a ***spiritual being***, bestowing life." However it is not the spiritual body, but the physical body which comes first, and the spiritual body follows. The first man was earthly, being taken from the ground. The second Man is heavenly. And as was the earthly man, so also are we of the earth. And as is the heavenly Man, so also shall we be when we too take on heavenly form. For just as we have born the image of the earthly man, so also shall we bear the image of the heavenly Man.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:42-49

The body is a home for the spirit, and *this* body we now inhabit is more “soulish” (i.e., more attuned to the physical life we now lead), while the resurrection body will be more attuned to our spirit, giving it much greater rein than we can now even imagine for our service to and appreciation of the Lord:

For at the present time our perception [of heavenly things] is like [viewing] a dim reflection in a mirror. But then [when we meet the Lord] we will see [Him] face to face. Now I have only partial knowledge, but then my knowledge [of Him] will be complete, just as He has always known me.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:12

b) The heart: interface between body and spirit: The word “soul” is not the only biblical word that refers to the whole person, i.e., a spirit and a body which together constitute a living human being. The word “heart” (Hebrew: *lebh*, *bl* or *lebhabh*, *bb*l; Greek: *kardia*, καρδία) likewise refers to the human being as a unity, but with a special twist: scripture uses the term “heart” to refer to the whole person from an ***internal*** point of view, focusing on and encompassing all the facets of the inner life (e.g., mentality, volition, emotion, conscience, etc.):

Many are the plans of a man's *heart*, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established.

Proverbs 19:21

The “heart”, then is the Bible’s word for the *interface* between the body and the spirit. That is to say, when scripture mentions the “heart”, it is referring to the inner spiritual, mental and emotional functioning of our person, of our human spirit thinking, planning, emoting, deciding, *all through the apparatus of the body* (via the brain, the mind, etc.). In our present constitution, the body is a tool for our spirit’s expression, but a delimiting one. For example, genetic, developmental and environmental factors have a great deal to do with our current capacity for thought and memory, for emotional control and expression, in a way that will not be true of our resurrection body (which will be *pneumatikon*, i.e., designed to give our spirit full expression: 1Cor.15:44). It will be recalled that a central plank in Satan’s appeal to his potential followers was the promise of a body to give these angelic spirits sensual expression (cf. Lk.24:39: “a spirit does not have flesh and bones”). What we have, they crave, and what we *shall* have (a body perfectly attuned to our spiritual life) is something that at present they marvel at as they behold the first One to possess such a magnificent “home” for the human spirit, the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When that great day of our resurrection arrives, we shall no longer be subject to the limitations and the temptations of the home we now inhabit. But as things stand now, here in this present body of corruption, the limitations are severe, and the temptations intense. “It has not yet appeared what we shall be[come]” (1Jn.3:2), but what we are now, *who* we really are now deep inside is best summed up by the “heart” in its scriptural usage, for “heart” is the essence of our inner selves, where only God can know our true thoughts, our true motives:

For the *heart* is more inscrutable than anything else and beyond curing [of its duplicity]. Who [among men] can [really] know [what] it [is thinking]? “I am the Lord, the One who probes the *heart* and tests [a man’s] motives, to repay everyone according to the path he [walks], in fitting recompense for [all] he does”.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

As to the term heart, in Hebrew, Greek and English, it does refer in secular usage to the physical organ that pumps life-sustaining blood throughout our physical bodies. Its selection as the “pith” of who and what we are as individuals is, therefore, no accident. As the queen among our bodily organs, at the center of our physical being, and inextricably bound up with the circulation of the blood, a fluid recognized from earliest times as essential to our continued physical existence, the “heart” was a natural choice for this prime designation. “Blood is the [symbol of] the life-soul” after all (Deut.12:23) – *physical life*, that is, and it is in the heart that for literary (if not medical) purposes that we imagine this to be concentrated. This is why the Old Testament scriptures connect the blood with the *nephesh*, the “soul” (Gen.9:4): when the blood flows out, so does the physical part of life, just as when the breath-spirit departs, so does the spiritual part of life. We see the end of physical life, the blood upon the ground, but the spirit departs we know not where:

Who knows whether a man's spirit rises upward or whether the breath of the beasts goes down to the earth below?  
Ecclesiastes 3:21

In spite of the body's corrupted sin nature (Rom.7:18), God has demonstrated very clearly through His superintendence of its development (Job 10:8-12; Ps.119:73; 139:13-16; Is.44:2, 21, 24) and His loving provision for it (Matt.6:25-34) that He is "for" this body we now possess (1Cor.6:13). We are the human spirit, not the body (2Cor.10:2-6), but we live in the body, and the battle we fight for the Lord, we fight out on the battleground of the heart, endeavoring to make our entire life, inner and outer, well-pleasing and acceptable to Him:

For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but are powerful for God, for the destruction of strongholds, destroying sophistries and every presumption that raises itself up against the knowledge of God, and taking every thought prisoner so as to obey Christ.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 10:4-5

But I perceive another law in my bodily members, waging war against the law in my mind and taking me prisoner – [a prisoner to] this law of sin that dwells in my body.  
Romans 7:23

By this we know that we are of the truth, and before Him we persuade our heart, that if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows everything.  
1<sup>st</sup> John 3:20

c) The word "soul" used as a synonym for "heart": Finally, it is necessary to point out that there are times when instead of "heart", the center of the "living being" we now are (thanks to the union of our spirit and our body), writers of scripture employ "soul" as a synonymous term. This development is common enough in literature. The specific literary figure involved is called *synecdoche*, the whole being substituted for the part. In the case of the use of "soul" for "heart", the whole of our "living person" is substituted for the nucleus of that person (where all thoughts, emotions, decisions and pangs of conscience occur). This substitution has parallels in English: "my *very being* longs for thee". Problems of interpretation only arise if one mistakenly takes this common literary use to mean that somehow the "soul" is a separate entity of our makeup (rather than the entire "being" we have seen it to be, encompassing our body and spirit in a living union):

You shall love the Lord your God with all your *heart* and with all your *soul* (i.e., your whole person) and with all your might.  
Deuteronomy 6:5

As a man thinks in his *soul* (i.e., his "heart"; cf. KJV), so he is.  
Proverbs 23:7

5. The Creation of Eve (Gen.2:18-24): Up until now we have been speaking of mankind in the generic sense, “Man” with a capital “m”, comprising both genders of our species. Before we move on to the original status of our first parents in the garden of Eden along with their temptation, fall and judgment, we must first consider what the Bible has to say about the creation of Eve and its implications. To appreciate the nature of Satan’s attack on Adam and Eve and the consequences of their sin to all subsequent relations between men and women, it is first necessary to understand, by way of preface, that the status of the relationship between the first man and the first woman in paradise *before the fall* was very different from what would obtain when they had been expelled from the garden of Eden *after the fall*:

Then the Lord God said [immediately after giving Adam instructions not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in verse 17], ***“It is not a good thing for the man to be alone. I will make for him a helper compatible with him”***. Now the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky from the dust of the ground and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever he called any living thing, that became its name. So Adam gave names to every beast and to all the birds of the sky and to every wild creature, but he did not find [one that could be] a helper compatible with him. Then the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and when he was asleep, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh behind it. And the Lord God sculpted the rib which He had taken from the man into a woman, then He brought her to Adam. And Adam said, “This now is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. She shall be called woman, because from man she was taken”. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, for the two will become a single body.

Genesis 2:18-24

As it was with Adam, so the creation of Eve’s body is unique. Neither of our first parents were born, Adam’s body being formed from the dust of the ground and Eve’s constructed from part of Adam’s. In terms of her inner essence, however, that is to say her human spirit, we have no additional information given in the passage above. What we do have, however, is the statement in Genesis 1:27 that delineates the creation of the spiritual essence of both Adam and Eve:

(26) Then God said, “Let us make Man in our image, according to our likeness, so that he may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and over the beasts and over the whole earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”. (27) So God created the man (i.e., “Adam”) in His image; in the image of God He created him; ***male and female*** He created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

The shift from “Man” (no definite article in the Hebrew) to “the man” (with the definite article in the Hebrew) is highly significant. On a collective basis, verse 26 applies to ***all human beings*** (i.e., “Man”), so that we may say that all mankind in a corporate sense must possess the image and likeness of God, and, consequently, the mandate to respond to God’s authority. In verse 27, however, the switch to the singular means that the focus has shifted from the general (all human

beings) to the specific (Adam in particular), and here the scripture is careful to attribute the image of God to Adam, but not to repeat this attribution when “male *and* female” come into view at the end of the verse. This apparent (but *only* apparent) contradiction is repeated in the New Testament where Paul can write in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:7 that a man is the “image and glory of God”, but that, on the other hand, a woman is “the glory of her husband”, and yet say in a second epistle to that same church (2Cor.3:18), that all of us (clearly men and women alike) are being “transformed *into the same image* (i.e., becoming more Christ-like)”.

What are we to say then? Do women share in the image of God or not? Genesis 1:26-27 is the beginning of the answer to this question, for in spite of carefully avoiding a positive answer, neither is a negative reply forthcoming in that passage. In fact, these two verses supply no basis for finding any *spiritual* differences between men and women. The only distinctions to be found are the two already mentioned:

1) male and female are separate categories. However, from the collective statement of verse 26, the conclusion seems unavoidable that the basis for this distinction *is not spiritual*, since no spiritual distinction is mentioned in this statement of the corporate creation of mankind (and we should expect something here if indeed men and women were to be distinguished spiritually). It must be assumed, therefore, that the human spirits of men and women are essentially the same, and that the mention of male and female categories in the following verse is a reference to our respective *bodies* (see below).

2) verse 27 makes no specific positive attribution of the image of God to Eve – but this is a far different matter from denying the image altogether.

The first point given above is easily buttressed by scripture. In Christ, a spiritual relationship, there is “no male or female” (Gal.3:28); men and women are equally “fellow heirs of the gift of eternal life” (1Pet.3:7); and, in eternity, both are relieved of the institution of marriage with its respective biblical roles (which is at the root of the apparent dilemma with which we are now dealing: Matt.22:30). We may also make a persuasive “argument from silence” and add that in all the passages of the Bible that speak of our hope, our resurrection and reward, one searches in vain for any evidence of significant distinction between men and women in eternity based on gender.

The second point given above is also conditioned by our current, earthly circumstance. Less so in the garden of Eden, but much more so after the fall, the relationship between husband and wife turns on the issue of authority. As co-heirs in Christ, women clearly must share in the image and likeness of God, partaking of the exact same spiritual essence men enjoy. But just as the male role was altered by the fall (Satan’s usurpation of Man’s rulership over the earth and the replacement of perfection with toil and hardship), the female role was also changed dramatically in respect to authority relationships (see section IV below). As a result, scripture is careful neither to deny woman’s spiritual equality, nor to minimize the authority of the husband by stressing that equality. For before God we are all equal, but in this present corrupt body, we are



all under various forms of authority, all ultimately delegated by God, and our proper response to that authority is intimately connected to the spiritual conflict that now rages unseen all around us (Eph.6:11-12). In Eden, just as the bodies of Adam and Eve were distinct from one another, so were their roles. However, in the perfection of paradise, this distinction did not have the authority implications that would later obtain after the introduction of sin (which makes the exercise of authority in human relationships at all levels absolutely essential):

For man did not come from woman, but woman from man. Moreover, man was not created because of woman, but woman because of man. For this reason, a woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head (i.e., properly arranged hair) **because of the angels**. However, **in the Lord**, woman does not [have priority] over man, nor does man [have priority] over woman. For just as women are begotten by men, so men are birthed by women. **But everything comes from God.**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:8-12

This passage clearly affirms what we have suggested above, namely, that there are two ways of looking at this issue which are only superficially contradictory. Creation teaches both principles that Paul outlines above: 1) the precedence of Adam in the order of creation; 2) the equality of men and women before God. It is important to note that it is only *after* the fall that this precedence in the creation order has authority connotations, because the authority relationship in marriage is a result of the fall and the judgments of Genesis chapter 3. In the passage above, Paul switches the order in which these two principles are treated in Genesis 1:26-27. He first reproves the Corinthian woman for tearing and disheveling their hair in mourning after the pagan manner (a practice that shames our hope in the resurrection: cf. Deut.14:1; Mic.1:16). Using the priority of creation as an argument for their obedience on this point, Paul argues that such a practice dishonors their husbands by effacing the symbol of respect they are due by this priority of creation (cf. 1Tim.2:13). However, having established the obligation for the Corinthian women to respond to their husbands' authority on this point of abuse, he is quick to anticipate the false conclusion that men are somehow "better" than women in the eyes of God. In truth, he tells us, we are all equal "in the Lord", with absolutely no advantage accruing to the male gender, nor any disadvantage to the female gender. This lesson too, Paul reminds us, is taught by the natural order of creation: since neither men nor women can exist without the other, it stands to reason that God does not place a premium on either gender. And in fact, all things originate from the creative hand of God, so that neither gender has any grounds for boasting – all of us are subordinate to God's authority. This last point – that "everything comes from God" – is the most crucial. Whatever authority a husband has over a wife, an employer over an employee, a government official over a citizen, a pastor over a member of his congregation, all these forms of authority have been delegated by God for His own wise and sovereign purposes and it is well to remember that there is no man, no woman who is not subject to many forms of God's delegated authority as long as he or she be in this present body. The predominate reason for the current distinction in authority between the sexes is the marriage relationship and the obligations it places upon both parties, but in eternity, there will be "no marrying nor giving in marriage" (Matt.22:30).

The present status quo of authority distinctions in the institution of marriage will not obtain in eternity, where there will be no corruption and no marriage. The relationship between the first husband and wife in Eden, however, occupies a middle ground between our present circumstances and our future hope. There was marriage in paradise (and certain central points of the marriage relationship continue today as they were in the beginning: Matt.19:3-9). But the specific delineation of the husband's authority over the wife which we find stated in principle in Genesis chapter three (and spelled out in detail in the New Testament epistles: Eph.5:21-33; Col.3:18-19) was apparently lacking for the simplest of all possible reasons: it was unnecessary (see section III, immediately following).

### **III. Status Quo in Paradise**

Eden, whose very name means "delight" in Hebrew, was a place of perfection; nothing was lacking that could contribute to Man's legitimate happiness, nor was anything present that might make life bitter. God placed Adam in charge of the garden, making him God's delegated authority, God's "regent" on earth (Gen.1:26-30). The duties that fell to Adam's lot as a result of God's charge seem to have been entirely satisfying and enjoyable, while at the same time none too taxing or onerous:

- The garden was irrigated by a system of rivers and mist specially constructed by the Lord (Gen.2:6; 10-14).
- The trees brought forth a pleasant variety of sustenance "pleasing to the sight and enjoyable for eating" apart from any horticultural care (Gen.2:9).
- Boredom was not a problem, for God provided satisfying intellectual and physical labor, such as the classification and categorization of the complex and intricate system of flora and fauna He had created (Gen.2:19-20a).
- Nor was spiritual sustenance lacking, for the Lord placed in the center of the garden the tree of life for spiritual refreshment (Gen.2:9 with Rev.22:2), and visited our first parents for spiritual fellowship after their working day was done (Gen.3:8).

The one want Adam had, God remedied almost immediately, that is, his need for companionship. The elimination of this deficiency is, after all, God's stated reason for creating Eve: "It is not a good thing for the man to be alone" (Gen.2:18). Obviously, the Lord was aware of this fact before He created Adam (a point emphasized by the mandate in Gen.1:28 to "be fruitful and multiply"). But Adam was a human being, the exact same divine mix of body and spirit that each one of us are, so that God did not deem it appropriate merely to supply him with a mate in the manner of animals. Adam is instead allowed to discover his need for companionship through a heuristic process of observation (Gen.2:19-20), with the result that he can appreciate both his own need and God's gracious gift of Eve to him (Gen.2:23):

I will make for him a helper compatible with him.  
Genesis 2:18b

The verse above is crucial to our understanding of the point we are now discussing, namely that things were different in the garden. Eve is not to be a servant, but, literally, “a help” (Hebrew: *rzi*, ‘*ezer*). Secondly and critically, she is to be “someone who corresponds to him” (Hebrew: *vdgnk*, *ceneghdo*), that is, someone who complements and fulfills him in all compatibility. The closeness and intimacy of the relationship between our first parents foreshadowed in this verse is underscored by Eve’s creation. The Lord’s formation of Eve’s body from one of Adam’s ribs adds the physical dimension to the spiritual one outlined in Genesis 2:18b above. In short, it would have been impossible for Adam and Eve to have been any closer, body and spirit, and still have been two distinct people. When the Lord presents to Adam this wife who was in every way an answer to his search for companionship, his words bespeak not only gratitude, but an appreciation for this God-given relationship of exceptional intimacy and closeness:

And Adam said, “This now is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. She shall be called woman, because from man she was taken”.  
Genesis 2:23

Ideally, based on the pattern in paradise, the marriage relationship should even now continue to be what it was then: even closer than the next closest of all other human relationships, the parent-child relationship:

For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, for the two will become a single body.  
Genesis 2:24

Scripture, then, while emphasizing the closeness of the union between Adam and Eve, does not provide many specifics on the issue of authority between the first man and woman prior to the fall. We know that Adam was created first (cf. 1Tim.2:13), and that Eve was created for Adam, not the other way around (cf. 1Cor.11:8-9). However, neither the Genesis account, nor the New Testament references intimate an authority structure between husband and wife similar to the one instituted in Genesis chapter three by the Lord as a result of the fall of that first couple (Gen.3:16b).

The reason for this absence, as we have suggested above, is that such an authority structure was unnecessary in paradise. For instance, Adam and Eve had no monetary and no sexual problems. Given the extremely high percentage of marital difficulties today attributable to these two factors alone, one can appreciate immediately that this first marriage was operating on a much different “battlefield” than every marriage since. Furthermore, and perhaps more to the point, our first parents were sinless before they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Neither Adam nor Eve was initially capable of being selfish or hurtful, self-centered or insensitive. The garden was a world full of intriguing possibilities, all of them perfectly legitimate – with one exception. As long as our first parents abstained from the forbidden fruit,

nothing was withheld from them, nothing was lacking for them, no personal ambition or desire that they could in innocence conceive was denied them. In short, there was essentially no area where authority might even have any opportunity to function between the first man and the first woman, for it was completely unnecessary. There was no occasion for Eve's will to bump into Adam's, because there was nothing that Adam could or would tell Eve to do or not to do, even if such a thing had occurred to him or to her (and that is doubtful given their innocence and their perfect surroundings). Indeed, *the only* negative prohibition was the command to abstain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and this command came from God Himself and was equally applicable to both Adam and Eve. As long as they both followed God's will on this point, marital problems were an impossibility, and, therefore, the issue of "who was in charge" was an entirely moot point.

In status quo in the garden of Eden, then, God had provided this new species of spiritual creatures who, unlike the angels, possessed physical bodies, every means for complete fulfillment of their lives (both spiritual and physical). Adam and Eve (and their progeny, had it come to that) had the opportunity to experience the never-ending bounty of God's provision in paradise, perfect in every way, yet completely apart from sin. Even the short span of time that this state of perfection did continue was sufficient to demonstrate to the fallen angels the futility of their own designs and the hollowness of Satan's promises. For the perfect mix of spirit *and* body which God provided for our first parents was undeniably superior to any creature-possession that the devil could ever hope to engineer. Satan, of course, did not waste time in analyzing the situation, and soon found a devious method to induce our first parents to throw paradise away. But before we cast too wistful a glance back to the garden, we should consider that this fiasco too was anticipated by God's plan, and that the ultimate state of redeemed humankind will be even more glorious than Adam and Eve could ever have imagined in the garden on that blessed day when we rise incorruptible in the new bodies that God has preordained for us who love Him and His Son.

#### **IV. The Fall**

The creation of a new species of spiritual being, capable of moral response to God's authority, was rightly perceived by Satan as a threat, even a direct challenge to his continued existence. There could be no doubt that Adam and Eve were "aimed" at him. Mankind was ...

- Placed on the same world (now re-constructed) from which he had been so unceremoniously evicted.
- Entrusted with God's delegated authority over the earth and its creatures – a charge very similar to the one which he had abused.
- Commanded to multiply.

This last point must have been particularly disturbing to the devil. In perfect conditions, it would not be long until the population of this new species, so much like his fallen minions in all the morally important ways, expanded to the point of equaling the numbers of his followers. At that point, Satan and his angels would be de facto replaced in God's universe, person for person. And when earth was filled with a population of obedient, God-serving, morally responsible creatures, all responding to the Lord in the exact way that Satan and his followers should have done ... the lake of fire was already in place (Matt.25:41; Rev.20:10); the judgment had already been passed (Jn.16:11). There could be little doubt that the noose was tightening. All wishful thinking that might suggest otherwise would have been removed by the realization that this new creature also possessed a God-given, God-designed **body**, the central point in the devil's original indictment of God and in his temptation of his would-be followers as well. One would have thought that, by now, Satan and his angels would have realized the impossibility of out-thinking God (let alone out-maneuvering or out-fighting Him). Satan, however, was not about to wait upon events.

1. Temptation: That Satan should, upon recognizing the threat posed to him by the unhindered multiplication of mankind, choose to fight tooth and claw, is a clear indication of the degree to which he (and his) had been confirmed in their evil. His attitude is unequivocal: if Man is the proof of his rebellion, then destroy the proof; if Man is the replacement for him, then eliminate the replacement. Do not respond to God; rather, oppose God at every turn in every possible way.

a. God's last olive branch: The question may well be asked whether God's creation of Man did not have an additional objective besides checkmating, then replacing Satan and his minions. Did there not still remain some avenue for grace? Before the temptation and fall of our first parents, when Man had not yet fallen into sin, Adam and Eve were, in a moral sense, very much like the reprobate angels before their fall (with the notable exception of the limitation of their knowledge, a point to which we shall return below). At that point, our first parents were not in need of a Messiah. They had not yet passed the point of no return, and the devil's record – in respect to them, at any rate – was still unmarked. God had restored the earth; could He not also restore Satan and his followers, if they were willing? These fallen angels must have observed Adam and Eve for a considerable amount of time before they struck. What if this observation had led them to rethink their conclusions, to realize the impossibility of struggling against the God of the universe? What if they had seen reaffirmed in His restoration of earth and His creation of and gracious provision for this new species a glimmer of the grace that characterizes His perfect person? What if they had come to see that the limitations of spirits in bodies (in the innocence of initial creation) were significant, and that their untrammelled spirituality was not, in fact, due to any desire on God's part to deprive them of anything? In short, what if Man was a lesson to the fallen angels just as he has come to be to the elect ones? Of the boundlessness of God's love and mercy there can certainly be no doubt. Indeed, we can really only dimly appreciate how much the infinite God loves His creatures, "not wishing for any to perish" (2Pet.3:9; cf. 1Tim.2:4), knowing even the number of the hairs on our heads (Lk.12:7), searching out every lost sheep (Matt.18:12-14), every missing coin (Lk.15:8-10). These scriptures, to be sure, refer to human beings, but God is also concerned for His angels, "calling each of them by name" (Ps.147:4), so that "not one of them is missing" (Is.40:26). What, then, if Adam and Eve

in paradise were the devil's "last chance" to recognize through observing them the power of God, the justice of God, the grace of God, the mercy of God? The placement of Adam and Eve in the garden is rightly seen as an action taken by God against the devil.<sup>30</sup> But what if, at the same time, it was also the Lord's last olive branch to these wayward creatures, a last appeal to his reprobate children to return to Him?

In the event, by attacking Adam and Eve and attempting to destroy them, Satan gave undeniable confirmation of the evil that was in him, and set in motion the inexorable machinery by which God is defeating and replacing him. But it is especially in our God's provision following the fall that we see His grace and goodness, His deep love for His creatures, shining through so clearly. Having fallen into sin, we needed a Savior, and He has provided us with Jesus Christ. Can there be any greater proof of the love that God feels for His creatures, of the hurt He experiences on their behalf, than that He was willing to hand His Son over to death to rescue us? God's provision of our Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate refutation of all the devil's lies. There can be absolutely no doubt about the justice and mercy of a God who would sacrifice His own Son in order to pay for the sins of His fallen creatures and so rescue them from death. In rejecting this final demonstration of the grace of God, Satan and his followers have voluntarily taken up the cup of His wrath, determined now in their hardness of heart to drink it to the dregs, and so fill up the full measure of their sins (cf. 1Thes.2:16b). This seemingly irrational conduct of Satan and his followers is most reminiscent of Pharaoh's opposition to the Lord's demands to "let My people go" – a hardening of the heart to an absolutely unbelievable degree that demonstrates God's power, justice, and mercy. The all-out opposition to God's plan that next transpires in human history demonstrates lucidly the confirmed sinfulness of Satan and his angels, heaping up veritable mountains of incontrovertible proof of the devil's guilt and deserved fate.<sup>31</sup>

We find in scripture no hint of any desire on the devil's part to take note of God's gracious provision to another, less powerful, but morally similar species, no indication that "learning" or "repentance" ever seriously entered the demons' collective mind. Quite the contrary, the ferocious and devious attack of Satan upon Adam and Eve serves to confirm beyond all argument to the contrary that God was right and righteous in His judgment of the devil and his followers, for Satan's response to this new development was to destroy, to annihilate, to *murder* these new creatures at the very inception of things (Jn.8:44). Let there be no doubt: but for the restraining hand of God, the devil and his demon army would even now make quick work of all of us who now draw breath upon the earth (cf. Job chapters 1-2). In His grace, of course, God was not about to allow the devil and his angels to blast Adam and Eve off of the planet by means of their superior angelic power. Satan, therefore, counterattacked in the most effective way that was open to him: temptation.

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<sup>30</sup> As Delitzsch remarks (supra n.3), God opposing Man to the devil's rule was true even in Eden, where the devil's presence (in his possession of the serpent) was "a destructive power to which man was placed in opposition that he might overcome it" (SOBP, 75).

<sup>31</sup> See Part II of the series Exodus 14: Hardening Pharaoh's Heart.

b. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil: The first man and woman, as we have already seen, were apparently free to do anything and everything that their innocent hearts could conceive. The one exception to this principle of complete liberty to enjoy God and His creation in a positive and wholesome way was the prohibition that God gave Adam against eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:

Then the Lord God gave orders to the Man as follows: “You may certainly eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – from it you may not eat, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die”.

Genesis 2:16-17

Before discussing what this tree was and why it was in Eden in the first place, one salient point – often overlooked in discussions of these verses – needs to be addressed: God in His grace not only told Adam *not* to do it, He told him *why not*. Under no obligation to do more than make the matter plain through a straight-forward prohibition, the Lord nonetheless reinforced the ban on eating fruit from this one particular tree by adding an absolutely truthful explanation of the penalty for disobedience. This is no small point. Adam and Eve may have been in a condition of “innocence”, but that does not mean that they were childish or child-like, incapable of understanding anything beyond a flat “no!”. Indeed, their level of intelligence was most likely far superior to our own, uncorrupted as it was by sinfulness in any way.<sup>32</sup> God did not treat them like children, because they were every bit as mature and perceptive as any of us (only without sin). His disclosure of the pertinent facts was full and complete. The critically important truth that death would follow disobedience turned out to be the point where Satan ultimately attacked (by distorting this truth, as we shall see below). Nevertheless, God, in full knowledge of what would happen, still did not deny Adam and Eve this essential knowledge: as spiritual creatures morally bound to respond to His authority, it was important for our first parents to know not only what was prohibited, but also *the consequences* of disobeying the prohibition. Adam and Eve did not have a need to know good and evil in the garden, but they did need to know the punishment for rebelling against God, for without such knowledge, the seriousness, the permanence, the utter irrevocability of such a sin could hardly have been appreciated. Adam and Eve did indeed understand the gravity of violating this command, because the Lord God Himself made it clear to them. To have done otherwise would not have been in keeping with His perfect character.

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<sup>32</sup> Just as the inhabitants of ancient civilizations (e.g. Egypt, Israel, Greece and Rome) were, on an individual level, of superior intellect to the current population of the world, the same was probably the case for the first several generations of mankind (to an even greater degree). It is true that in today’s world we possess greater collective knowledge, but, man for man, and woman for woman, we would be no match for our ancestors of millennia past: e.g., an individual Roman could build a bridge to last thousands of years; we can all *use* computers (but cannot on our own build all the components that run them).

As to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil itself, it is important to remember that it was planted (and thus created) by God Himself:

Now the Lord God caused to spring up from the ground every sort of tree which was pleasant to behold and good for food, and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.  
Genesis 2:9

This is essential to understand, because this famous tree, stemming from God's creative hand, was *not* evil in any way. Rather, eating from it (in violation of God's specific and unequivocal commandment) gave the partaker an expanded ability to distinguish between good and evil, it gave the ability to be "knowing good and evil". For sinful persons in the midst of the devil's world, the ability to distinguish between good and evil, between "right and wrong" as we should say, is of tremendous importance. This expansion of the natural conscience is now an integral part of our physical makeup as a direct result of our first parents' sinful partaking of the forbidden fruit (Rom.2:14-16). For those naturally inclined to be sinful, a clear grasp of what is sin (and what is not) is indispensable for navigating a safe course through the devil's world (not to mention being an indicator of our utter sinfulness and need for a Savior: cf. Gal.3:23-25). But for two perfect people in paradise, insulated from the evil in the universe authored by Satan, such knowledge was completely unnecessary. They were not subject to temptation or capable of sin in any way whatsoever – with the single exception of the prohibition against eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a prohibition with a corresponding penalty out of all possible proportion to the pleasure of eating its fruit (easily duplicated from almost any other tree in the garden). Here is the wisdom and grace of God: Adam and Eve had no inordinate desire for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and no need for or independent interest in attaining a knowledge of "good and evil", ideas for which they lacked any frame of reference entirely. But God in His grace and in His wisdom so provided for them that if they *should* violate His command (and so experience immediate spiritual death, entering into a state of sin), they would then also acquire the knowledge that they would then require for their new fallen state: i.e., a knowledge of what was good and what was evil, of what was right and what was wrong. For, *after sinning*, this would be the only way for them to see God's goodness and their own sinfulness, and so discern the devil's deception.

A second tree stood beside the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the very middle of the garden of Eden: the tree of life. The tree of life was the most sublime of all the flora which God had created. Its fruit gave spiritual refreshment and provided physical rejuvenation (Gen.3:22 ; cf. Rev.22:2). It was the focal point of Adam and Eve's universe, and most likely the place where they met with the Lord "in the cool of the day" (cf. Gen.3:8). Had they merely refrained from that other, prohibited tree, they could have, they would have lived forever in bliss in the middle of this perfect paradise, constantly refreshed and restored by the fruit from the tree of life.

So why was it there, this other tree, this tree of a type of knowledge for which Adam and Eve had no need whatsoever, would only need, in fact, if they should disobey God and eat of its fruit? Why did the Lord place it immediately beside the tree of life, the focus and means of refreshment



and spiritual fellowship? The answer to these questions is simple enough. By creating a tree whose fruit was forbidden to them, God gave our first parents the option of *not* following His will, a will that clearly had only their best interests at heart, for violation and rebellion would result in immediate spiritual death. And just as God did not hide from them the consequence of disobedience, neither did He hide away the tree of the knowledge of good and evil itself. Nothing could be clearer about the choice Adam and Eve faced: life and death stood side by side in these two trees, the one a source of life and blessing which they experienced every day, the other a source of death, prohibited by God *and explained* by God (as we have seen). We have also discussed at great length (Part I of this series) that God wants worshipers, followers, believers who *want* Him. In terms of power, He is more than capable of forcing us to do His will, but that is not the God we have. Our God is a loving, merciful, *good* God, who will not force us to choose Him if we are determined in our hearts to rebel from Him. But as is clear from scripture, from human experience, and from the record of Adam and Eve, He always makes the issue crystal clear for us: to choose for Him is to follow a path of grace that He has lovingly constructed for our good before the dawn of time; to choose against Him, to rebel against His will, *that* is what takes the effort, a self-willed, arrogant, self-deceptive “kicking against the goads” that, from its inception to its ruinous conclusion, must break through all the barriers of grace and love that He has constructed in our behalf to guide us back to the true path. As sinners at birth, we are not in the situation of “maintaining paradise” (as our first parents were), but rather of “accepting salvation”. Everything that God has constructed, all nature, all science, all we know and see and think and feel, declares His existence (Ps.19:1-4; Rom.1:18-21), and yet everything we observe about ourselves and our fellow man virtually shouts that we are sinful and in desperate need of His help, His salvation (Rom.7:7-11). As Adam and Eve in the garden merely had to follow the unmistakably clear guidance of God to avoid death, so they and we outside of the garden only need to follow the powerfully magnetic pull of God’s truth in the gospel of Jesus Christ to transcend death through Him (Jer.31:3; Hos.11:4; Jn.6:44-45):

And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to Myself.  
John 12:32

c. The devil’s strategy: In order to continue enjoying paradise, Adam and Eve, created perfect, had only to refrain from something God had personally told them would kill them. Moreover, they knew very well what God had told them not to do, and had every reason to believe that what He had said about the dire consequences of violating His prohibition was absolutely true. For their entire lives (the period between their creation and fall, however long), they had experienced nothing but the favor, the blessing, the goodness of God. Even more to the point, there was *no reason* whatsoever for them to violate His will on the point of abstaining from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In fact, it is entirely doubtful that in the absence of the devil’s clever attack it would ever even have occurred to our first parents to eat this forbidden fruit, let alone actually do so.

Satan’s motives in moving against Adam and Eve have already been discussed and are clear enough. The propagation of these new creatures, willing to respond to God’s will would not only be a demonstration that other creatures (creatures with *bodies*, moreover) could and would be

obedient to God, thus vindicating His character against satanic slander and demonstrating the righteousness of His condemnation of the devil. The spread of perfect mankind would also form a natural replacement for Satan and his angels: Perfect human beings who chose not to sin would have made a perfect complement to the elect angels, and a fitting replacement for the fallen angels who would not choose to be reconciled to God.

We have no precise information as to how long the devil waited to launch his attack. It stands to reason that, given his own experience, Satan would want to give Adam and Eve time to sin on their own.<sup>33</sup> After all, the devil had done so without temptation, and we may assume that part of his defense before God had been that any sort of creature would eventually act as he had acted (i.e., sooner or later fall into sin and rebellion against God). But even though Man had possessed a freedom of the will comparable to that of the angels, it soon became apparent to the devil that he was unlikely to sin against God – without a push. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil had not the intrinsic attraction for Adam and Eve that the usurpation of universal rule had for Satan and his angels. The reason for this relative lack of interest in transgressing the bounds that God had set for them was rooted in the relative limitations of their knowledge and abilities. As terrestrial, corporeal creatures, mankind did not (and does not) possess an inherent knowledge of the spiritual realities of the universe, and was at the time incapable of leaving the earth in any case.<sup>34</sup> This lack of extensive and multifaceted knowledge (as possessed by the angels), coupled with the absence of angelic power and ability, thus turned out to be a strength in terms of our first parents' resistance to temptation. But every strength has a concomitant weakness, and the devil was quick to assess the vulnerabilities of this new species.

Prohibited by God from destroying the first man and woman physically, the devil designed an ingenious spiritual attack instead. If Adam and Eve's mental and physical limitations (relative to the angels) made the possibility of their disobedience remote (in a vacuum), these very same limitations might open them up to a more subtle assault. Our first parents' appreciation of the omnipotence, the magnitude, and, especially, the truthfulness of God fell far short of the angelic perception, and this turned out to be an exploitable avenue for the devil's strike. Satan's followers had possessed vast angelic knowledge and perception, but not physical bodies, so the devil had concentrated his efforts to tempt them in the latter area. Adam and Eve, on the contrary, had perfect physical bodies, but lacked the knowledge and perception of the angels precisely because of their physical limitations, and so it was toward these limitations that Satan directed his attack. It was her relative ignorance of the glory, the power, and the absolute

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<sup>33</sup> According to the "seven day" theory of biblical chronology, Adam and Eve would have been in the garden at least several decades before their fall (see part 5 of this series).

<sup>34</sup> The sum of millennia of technological developments has only served, when objectively viewed, to reinforce this appreciation of our severe limitations vis-a-vis even the physical universe (despite our arrogant human tendency to celebrate our somewhat paltry achievements in space-flight). In terms of the spiritual dimension, our technology has not (nor can) penetrate this barrier in the least.

veracity of God that would open Eve up to temptation along these lines, and, once successful, a similar failure on Adam's part to appreciate the magnitude of God's knowledge and faithfulness would lead him to follow suit. Satan saw his opportunity and seized it. The strategy was carefully conceived. If successful, it would disqualify mankind from being God's regent on earth (thus regaining for Satan some claim to the mastery of his former realm), and would place mankind in the same or at least an analogous situation to Satan and his angels: fallen from the grace of God and under sentence of divine judgment. It must have seemed to the devil a perfect plan, and, in his arrogance, it is doubtful he had any idea that his actions were destined to set in motion God's gracious plan of salvation for mankind in which God Himself would partake of humanity, wrest the world from Satan's grasp and cleanse the universe of the devil and his followers once and for all. Just as Satan had failed to appreciate God's final olive branch (as offered in the example of Adam and Eve), so he failed to realize that the all wise God had anticipated his every move.

2. The Fall: It is extremely important for every believer in Jesus Christ to understand the devil's method in his temptation of Eve, because his essential tactic in tricking her is the same one which always lies behind his attacks: distortion of the truth.

Truth is the one essential issue for Christians (Jn.8:32). Truth is what we are all about; truth is why we are here. Our God is the God of truth (Ps.31:5), and in truth we are to worship Him (Jn.4:24). Without faith in the truth, we cannot please Him (Heb.11:6), and only by listening to His truth can we grow close to Him and serve Him effectively (Zech.1:3-4; Mal.3:7; Jas.4:8). God's word is truth (Jn.14:6; cf. Jn.1:1; 1:14; 17:17). It is the word of God which Jesus, the Word of God (Jn.1:1), always emphasized (Jn.18:37b), and it is only by our acceptance of and allegiance to the living Word through the written word that we even are "believers" (Jas.1:18), that is to say, those who accept and respond to the truth of what God has to say. The first principle of truth is Jesus Christ (Jn.14:6). Once we accept Him, the truth of what the Father and the Spirit say about Him (Jn.14:16-17), then we enter into a life of learning about Him, about what He has to say to us, about what He wants from us (1Tim.2:4). Everything that emanates from Him is truth, the prime example being His Son who is, in fact, "*the* Truth" (Jn.17:17). Our Christian lives involve a great many issues, activities, decisions, tests and trials, but central to everything we do and everything we are as Christians is the truth that comes from God. To the extent that we appropriate His truth, learn it, believe it, test it, rely on it, live by it and are ready to die for it, we advance, we grow, we honor Him. Apart from what He says, we can do nothing, for apart from the truth of God, we do not even know what to do or how to do it. No action, no thought, no word from our lips can be right, can be true, without the knowledge of, the belief in, and the commitment to God's truth, as Jesus' final prayer on our behalf shows so well:

I have given them Your word, and the world hated them, because they are not of the world just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one. For they are not of the world just as I am not of the world. So make them holy *by means of Your truth – Your word is truth*. And just as

you sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. I am consecrating Myself for their sake, so that they too may be made holy *through truth*.  
John 17:14-19

Today, we know where to go to find the truth: God's truth is found in the Bible, "the word of God, the word of truth" (Jn.17:17; Heb.4:12). Now Adam and Eve did not have a Bible; instead, they had personal instruction from the Lord God Himself (an epiphany of the pre-incarnate Christ).<sup>35</sup> This brings up an interesting and important point: the case of Adam and Eve is just one in a series of scriptural examples that prove beyond any doubt that lack of faith and failure to grow spiritually have nothing whatsoever to do with the form in which God has made His truth available. No vision, no sign, no dream, no epiphany, no personal appearance of God Himself, no rapture to the third heaven, nothing, in fact, will serve to turn unbelief into belief, simply because of its form. For every Paul on the road to Damascus, there are millions and billions of lost souls who would never have responded the way Paul did (as vouchsafed by the multitudes that rejected our Lord in person during His first advent, or the rebellious activities of the Exodus generation who had seen so many of God's mighty miracles first-hand). The hard heart of unbelief is more impenetrable than any material known to Man. But God is just, and faithful, and merciful, and He well knows what manner and means will reach those who truly wish to seek Him.

The personal appearance of the Lord in Eden to deliver His mandates did not keep our first parents from sinning; and when He came in the flesh, His teaching was often rejected (for He experienced the rejection of all but the most faithful of His disciples: Jn.1:11; 6:60; 6:66). Similarly, there are many people who blame their lack of faith upon the form in which God's truth is currently "packaged", assuming (in ignorance) that somehow the Bible is "not quite" God's inspired Word. Unbelief always manages to find an excuse (as it did in Jesus' day), and the devil always manages to exploit this lack of trust in God and His Word (as he did in the garden). The essence of Satan's strategy in attacking Adam and Eve was the same then as it is now: drive a wedge of deception between the believer (or potential believer) and the truth.<sup>36</sup>

And the two of them, the man and his wife, were *nude*, but they felt no shame. And the serpent, more than any other wild creature which the Lord God had made, was *shrewd*.  
Genesis 2:25-3:1a

The Hebrew word '*arum* (*,vri*), rendered as "shrewd" above, is very difficult to translate into English. It refers to a complexity of character which may either be laudatory ("prudent, careful, circumspect") or derogatory ("wily, crafty, cunning"). Thus the King James translation is, in one sense, quite good, for "subtle" is one of only a handful of English adjectives that can bear the

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<sup>35</sup> See Part 1 of Bible Basics: Theology: The Study God, section II.C, "The Trinity in the Old Testament".

<sup>36</sup> See Peter #27 for a detailed analysis of the Satan's method of attack at the fall.

meaning of “deep and complicated” in reference to personality without choosing between positive and negative attribution. Now this is a very important issue in the interpretation of Genesis 3:1. The serpent, along with all other living things on the earth, was one of the Lord God’s own creations (Gen.1:24-25). We cannot be sure of its appearance before it was cursed to crawl on its belly, but one thing of which we can be certain is that such a creature would never have been capable of (or interested in) tempting his human sovereigns to sin (cf. Gen.1:26 & 28). “Subtle” and “shrewd” bespeak a quality of animal personality without at the same time attributing to the serpent an innate malevolence – what it did, it did under the control and guidance of the devil (as we shall shortly see). But within these famous verses of scripture is an important point often overlooked in exegesis: the final verse of chapter two is intimately connected with the opening verse of chapter three, and the paronomasia between “nude” and “shrewd” (i.e., between ‘*arom* and ‘*arum*: almost identical in the Hebrew) serves as a very deliberate connection and contrast. Adam and Eve are naked; so unsophisticated in the ways of the world are they that they do not even perceive the necessity for what is perhaps the most basic of all human conventions, the wearing of clothing. One should expect nothing less from our first parents before partaking of the fruit of the forbidden tree: they had no cognizance or understanding of the difference between good and evil since everything they saw, or touched, or experienced in any way *was good*. Certainly they felt no shame at being naked – they hadn’t a clue what shame was. In the animal kingdom, the wild creature who contrasted most sharply to our first parents was the serpent. His careful, circumspect, shy behavior was very different from the innocently open and straight-forward conduct of Adam and Eve. This was animal behavior, of course, behavior in quite a different category from our own, but inevitably viewed by us (and our first parents) in anthropomorphic terms (in the same way that we observe distinct “personalities” in our pet cats and dogs). Adam and Eve would certainly have even more reason to think in these terms if, indeed, some of what these pre-fall creatures uttered was perceptible to them (Eve, after all, does not seem at all shocked when the serpent addresses her). By calling the serpent “subtle” or “shrewd”, scripture directs our attention to his “worldliness” in contrast to Adam and Eve’s “nude innocence”, without, at the same time, making the serpent seem intrinsically bad (he certainly did not seem so to Adam and Eve before the fall). The serpent was the perfect choice for Satan’s attack, and apparently a creature very familiar to our first parents because of his uniqueness. Moreover, because his “personality” bespoke a careful “wisdom” of sorts, he was just the mouthpiece the devil was looking for to spread his lies.

And he said to the woman, “Did God *really* tell you not to eat from any tree in the garden?”

Genesis 3:1b

This is not a “Balaam’s donkey” situation (cf. Num.22:28-30). This verse and the ones which follow clearly depict a casual conversation between Eve and the serpent, that is to say, not an uncommon event (in contrast to Balaam being addressed by his donkey). The first woman betrays no surprise at the fact that the serpent speaks to her, and it seems quite clear that this was not their first conversation. As a creature with a “special relationship” to Adam and Eve, the serpent was Satan’s obvious choice as a vehicle (through possession of its body) for attacking our

first parents. The identification of the devil with the serpent here in the first book of the Bible is most clearly presented in its final book:

And the great dragon, *the ancient serpent*, the one called Devil and Satan, was thrown down; even he who *deceives* the entire world was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revelation 12:9

However, what should have caught Eve's attention was not who was speaking, but rather what was being said. For the serpent's question contains a number of subtle indications that all is not right:

- the serpent refers to the Lord God with the more familiar title "God", thus subtly diminishing His authority and bringing Him down to her level (cf. Gen.3:8, 9, 13,14).
- the serpent evinces surprise that the Lord God would go so far as to prohibit her from doing *anything*, thus subtly suggesting that He has unfairly deprived her of something desirable.
- the serpent mis-states what the Lord God actually did tell Adam (Gen.2:16-17).

This last point is the most subtle of all. Typically, the devil's attacks center around a distortion of God's truth. Satan was not looking to plant a new and obviously false idea in Eve's head. His strategy was much more devious than that. Satan had found a weak link in our first parents' armor, and by mis-stating God's very specific prohibition, he was probing that weakness. No one would have been more surprised than the devil had Eve agreed with the serpent's question. Nor did he suppose that she would express ignorance on the subject. On the contrary, Satan fully expected Eve *to correct* her misguided pet ("Did God really tell you not to eat from *any* tree in the garden?"). This approach had two advantages:

1) Based upon his observations of the first woman over what might very well have been an extended period of time, it was clear to the devil that some sort of diversionary attack would be necessary. Otherwise, the bizarre event of her pet acting and talking more like Adam and herself than a subordinate animal lacking self-awareness would be bound to raise Eve's suspicion (and this had to be avoided at all costs). This seemingly innocent question on the serpent's part cried out for correction. The serpent's assumption was wrong, oh so wrong, demonstrably wrong, since he had observed the first couple eating from many a tree in the garden for lo these many years. This point, of course, should have occurred to Eve. Although it is true that she had no idea her little pet had been taken over by the devil, the question was so ridiculous as to be troubling. But Satan had correctly discerned that Eve's natural urge to correct, to "educate" this weaker creature, her maternal instinct, if you will, would override her suspicions, and draw her into the dialogue.

2) Satan had also observed that Eve's understanding of the Lord God's command was imprecise. It is very likely that Adam is the source of the additional "rider" appended to the Lord's command "and that we must not touch it". Adam, after all, had been the one to whom the Lord had given the command – before Eve's creation (Gen.2:15-18). Here we see Adam's natural urge to emphasize an important prohibition (his paternal instinct, if you will). But the imprecision, however well meant, gave Satan an opportunity. Once the devil had managed to get Eve engaged in this conversation, he was confident that her false appraisal of what exactly it was that God had said would provide the leverage he needed. For as soon as she began to question God on one point, Satan knew that everything He had commanded would then become subject to interpretation (and disposal at whim).

The devil's strategy as employed against Eve is thus critically important for us to understand today, for his tactics remain essentially the same: first, involve us in a "dialogue", some form of subtle temptation, verbal and otherwise, which engages our egos and our arrogance; second, use this dalliance with him to throw the slightest shadow of doubt upon some aspect of God's word, God's commands, or God's character; finally, as soon as a fracture of distrust, a fissure of failing belief, appears in our shield of faith, then slam home whatever wedge will fit the crack.

Our entire Christian experience is predicated upon an initial and an abiding faith, trust and belief in God through the Person of His Son Jesus Christ, the living Word, as expressed in His scriptures, the written word. Satan will always be lurking to sever us from this faith, and his most effective methodology in doing so can be clearly seen in his attack on Eve: that is, the perversion of the word of God. It is no accident that in both the first multiple book of the Bible (the Pentateuch or Torah), and in the last book of the Bible, we are severely warned not only against subtracting anything from the Bible, *but also about adding anything to it* (Deut.4:2; Rev.22:18). Both the omission of critical truth and the addition of non-truth play right into the devil's hands. For if he can get us to compromise on one point, anything else is possible.

Then the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden."  
Genesis 3:2

Had Eve stopped there, the entire course of human history would have been radically different. But she was not content to correct the serpent's mis-statement (though, as we have suggested, the question itself should have given her pause). Instead, she allowed herself to be drawn into the discussion which clearly lies behind this loaded-question. The entire thrust of Satan's carefully planned assault is to get Eve thinking about and discussing God's commandment concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (without, at the same time, alerting her suspicion). Having disabused her pet of his false notion, Eve simply cannot stop herself from repeating and explaining her understanding of God's command, an understanding which was noticeably imperfect (as Satan must have known only too well). Let it be noted that the serpent, as an animal, had absolutely no need to know about this prohibition: the command not to eat had been directed by God to mankind only. The gratuitous nature of the lesson she proceeded to give the serpent should also have set off some sort of warnings in the back of Eve's mind, but it is clear

from the biblical account that the process of temptation was, as it so often does, gaining momentum with every step of the dance.

“But from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said that we must not eat from it, *and that we must not touch it*, lest we die”.

Genesis 3:3

Although Eve is eager to give the serpent a “lesson” in what God had and had not said, it is most unfortunate that she is so very quick to follow her pet in referring to the Lord God (His name as used elsewhere in chapter three: Gen.3:8, 9, 13,14) by the much more familiar “God”. Familiarity, as the proverb has it, often breeds contempt, and the lack of respect engendered by this breach of etiquette was to cost Eve dearly. Whenever we, as Christians, seek to make it a matter of personal policy to always sanctify God in the eyes of all with whom we deal (respecting His Name and His Person, giving Him the glory, testifying by our deeds as well as our words that we do trust and hope in Him), we can expect this commitment to be challenged by the devil (cf. Num.20:12; Matt.6:9). It is always easier to accommodate ourselves to lower opinions of the Lord held by those with whom we may be speaking. Such was Eve’s situation, and instead of properly rebuking the serpent for his lack of respect for the Lord God, Eve chose to sink to his level. Accommodation is often a very valuable tool in communicating with others, but the one thing that can never be compromised is God’s truth. Eve failed to see that a principle had been attacked here, the principle of the Lord God’s dignity and, hence, His authority. Once Satan had effected a breach on this front, his victory was not far off. In order to pass this most difficult test, it would have behooved Eve to have had a healthy fear of God. The last thing she needed in the face of the devil’s wily attack was the feeling that she was somehow on equal terms with God, “more or less”. This sort of arrogance is the height of folly, and has been at the root of many a shipwrecked faith in every generation since:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Proverbs 1:7

Ironically, Adam and Eve had first to reject the one principle of wisdom which they did possess and understand (i.e., “don’t eat from the tree”) in order to gain the “knowledge” that doing so had been a very bad idea indeed.

As the serpent’s teacher, Eve was not particularly well prepared. First, she had added to the Lord’s injunction (Adam’s “rider” about not even touching the tree). Second, she had followed this up by mimicking the serpent’s lack of respect for the Lord (calling Him “God” instead of “the Lord God”). And there is a third crucial mistake in her response which also demonstrates Eve’s failure to grasp the key issues of life and death at stake here. Rather than using its rightful name, Eve calls the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the “tree which is in the middle of the garden” (Gen.3:3). This is a neutral-sounding name which not only omits the warning implied in “knowledge of good *and evil*”, but also overlooks the source of life from which she and Adam drew daily sustenance. For there were, in fact, *two* trees in the middle of the garden (Gen.2:9). The other tree, of course, the *first* tree mentioned by name in Genesis 2:9, was the tree of life.



This first tree, directly opposite the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, also served as a clear sign and symbol to our first parents. For it was a daily, visual and tangible reminder that their life of blessing and freedom from want depended upon their continued *partaking* from this first tree as much as it did upon their continued *abstinence* from that other tree. The tree of life, the one whose fruit sustained, maintained and enriched their lives, was *also* in the middle of the garden, and had *not* been forbidden by God. Only that other tree, the one whose fruit would most certainly bring immediate death, had been forbidden, with both the injunction and the consequence spelled out by the Lord God Himself. By positioning these two trees directly opposite each other in Eden's midst, God had made the issue of life and death perfectly clear in a graphic, spatial way: it was impossible to turn and face the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree which brought *death*, without first having *turned away* from the tree of *life*.

“You will surely *not* die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that on the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God [or “gods”], knowing good and evil.”

Genesis 3:4 -5

With this violent contradiction by the serpent, Eve quickly transitions from teacher to student. Having hastily (and faultily, as we have seen) set to correcting the serpent, she is now only too eager to drink in these cunning words. In this swift reversal of Eve's position, we see the inherent weakness of conviction which is based upon emotion rather than absolute faith in the truth. That Eve did not have an unshakable faith in what the Lord God had said about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is certainly proved by her willingness to accept the serpent's lie in place of God's truth. While it is certainly true, as many commentators have noted, that Satan undermined Eve's resolve by appealing to her ego, and that his method of temptation was both deceptive and highly effective, the point cannot be made too strongly that if only she had really *believed* what God had said, she would have been more inclined to disbelieve these diabolical words which so directly contradicted our Lord's words.

As we have had occasion to say time and again, it is a basic principle of the human spirit as conceived and constructed by God, that truth must first be rejected before the lie can be accepted. In her eagerness to become the serpent's instructor, Eve had not made God the issue, but herself. Specifically, she had gloried in her own knowledge (as inadequate and defective as it was). As a result, when the serpent unexpectedly challenges her position, she is easily shaken, because she is not grounded firmly in the faith of God's truth, but in the unstable emotional false confidence of her own ego. Further, since her position is built upon emotion and false information, there is no logical bedrock from which to mount a defense against this challenge. With the skill of a Socratic philosopher or a defense attorney, the serpent has led Eve into a forensic cul-de-sac. With her confidence shaken and her passive skepticism about God's commandment exposed, she has been rendered receptive to the lies that now spew forth from the serpent's mouth.

The devil (in the guise of the serpent) wasted no time in demolishing Eve's shaky bravado. As he so often does when dealing with moral weakness (nonchalance about God and His word in this case), the devil launched a direct assault. His statement that Eve and her husband would

“not die” as a result of partaking of the forbidden fruit was a compound lie. In truth, disobedience meant instant *spiritual death* (condemnation by and alienation from God), eventual *physical death* (as the process of degeneration began), and ultimate *eternal death* (in the absence of some amazingly gracious intervention by God Himself, of which possibility it is doubtful that even Satan had any clue at this juncture). Physical death, we know, would not come immediately after the first couple ate the fruit, but it did become inevitable, so that there is really not a grain of truth in what the devil had to say. From any point of view, this was a horrendous lie, not only because it was so untrue, but because it was meant, in effect, to mercilessly murder the first man and woman (Jn.8:44).

Satan’s lie was, in fact, so brazen, that Eve *couldn’t believe it wasn’t true*. The so-called “big-lie” phenomenon is one which has been repeated many times since in the course of human history. Claims and falsehoods that are so bold and so outrageous as to contradict the obvious truth are often capable of stirring a latent and powerful arrogance set deep in the human heart. For instinctively we as a species seem to understand that if truth itself can be destroyed and negated, then there is no obstacle that can stand in our way, there is nothing to prevent us from storming the very gates of heaven itself (and joining the ruler of this world in his quest to unseat the Ruler of the universe). But this, of course, is an impossible “if”, and despite the waves of mind-numbing arrogance it may send pulsing through the dark places in our hearts, whether in universal terms or a simple statement in the here and now, truth shall ever stand, and the lie shall always be doomed to repudiation and defeat.

The possibility of disobedience with impunity, “eat and not die”, quickly transforms Eve from an advocate for God to a curious listener. Her zeal for God ebbs away rapidly and she becomes more than willing to give the devil his say (Rom.10:2). What she hears after this reassuring lie completes the transformation from opponent, to listener, to disciple: if only she will eat of the forbidden fruit, she will become “like a god”.<sup>37</sup>

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and was attractive to the eye, and that the tree was desirable for bestowing insight, she took some of its fruit and ate it, then gave it also to her husband with her and he ate.

Genesis 3:6

True to the lesson she gave the serpent, Eve is still focused on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil rather than its fruit. This was unfortunate for her, because concentrating on the tree (which was merely the carrier of the fruit) clouded the crucial issue: *eating* its fruit was enjoined, not touching the tree that bore it. As a tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was apparently quite similar to the other trees in the garden, and that realization now sweeps through Eve’s mind: it bore fruit, pleasant to behold, and had a specific use – just like many (if not all) of the trees in the garden with which she had long been familiar. Seeing this particular tree as just

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<sup>37</sup> The Hebrew word for God (*'elohiym*, ,yhv'la) is, strictly speaking, a plural form, and can mean “gods” as well as God (cf. e.g., Num.25:2).

one of any number in a much larger category (none of which had ever done her any harm) went a far way towards mitigating whatever healthy fear she still possessed. Eve's unhealthy focus on the carrier of the fruit over the fruit itself also had the unintended consequence of emboldening her to eat. Touching can be accidental, and it certainly constitutes a much less dramatic involvement with anything than does "taking and eating". Had the barrier been seen right from the start as the actual eating of the fruit, the very sensual and deliberate nature of the act might have given Eve pause and led her to reconsider. But, because of her erroneous understanding of the Lord God's command, the barrier in her mind was the flimsy, almost arbitrary "touch-barrier", and we can almost see her sidling over to the tree and gingerly tapping it with her fingertip as we would a hot stove. Once this easy, false barrier had been breached, Eve must have felt secure that no further consequence would ensue from eating the fruit itself.

Beyond both of these two points which result from Eve's faulty understanding of God's word (i.e., the generalization of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil into the category of benign trees and the lowering of the transgression barrier in her mind), it must also be said that neither eventuality would have been of much effect if Eve had not lost her fear of God. What happened in her case is most important to note because it is a pattern for all of her children ever since. Ignorance, complacency and lust often combine to lead us into sin, and that was certainly what took place at the fall. Eve's relative *ignorance* of what God had said combined with her relative *complacency* about what the consequences of disobeying God might be made for a very weak shield of faith with which to meet the devil's attack. When challenged on her uncertain knowledge and assured that there would be no consequences, the prospect of "becoming god-like" was more than enough of a temptation to kindle her *lust* and strip away her meager defenses. This is the way the devil always works. He observes the chinks in our armor, our ignorance of the word of God, our disbelief, our doubts, our nonchalance about following in the footsteps of Christ (in general or on particular points), and then, armed with this critical "scouting report", he attacks, providing false information, false assurances, and tempting us (or frightening us) right when and where we are at our weakest.

The devil had a "file" on Adam too. Just as Satan had correctly discerned the most effective way to induce Eve to throw away her perfect life for a hollow promise and a vain hope, so he had shrewdly observed Adam's main point of vulnerability: Eve. Men in love have been writing poetry to and about the objects of their affections for millennia, but it is often overlooked that the very first poem in human history was written by Adam on the occasion of the Lord God's presentation to him of his wife:

And Adam said,

"This now is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh.  
She shall be called woman, because from man she was taken".  
Genesis 2:23

This couplet, in Hebrew poetic form, effectively encapsulates for us Adam's enthusiasm for this captivating new creature. No English translation can easily reflect the beauty, simplicity and

wittiness of this poem. For example, Adam’s clever naming of the woman (*’ishah*: hwa) is an elegant paronomasia on the word “man” (*’ish*: wya) derived by adding a feminine ending to it – the sort of thing which cannot easily be duplicated in our own tongue (even though the words “man” and “woman” are similarly close). Adam was clearly motivated to do more than say “thank you” to God and “hello” to the woman; for this grand occasion he mobilized his considerable verbal talents to create an entirely new mode of expression (poetry), providing us with an exquisite and graceful first specimen of this entirely new genre. Obviously, Eve inspired him – and why not? Of all the marriages that have since transpired in the history of our race, this is the only one of which we can say of the bride and groom that they were “a perfect match” for each other (because God Himself made the match, making the bride specifically for the groom: cf. 1Cor.11:9). Nor could there be any more perfect location for a honeymoon than the garden of Eden. Eve and Adam both, moreover, besides living in a perfect place, were themselves perfect, with no possible source of rancor, division or estrangement save one: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When Adam returned to the center of the garden (after an enjoyable day of observing and classifying Eden’s flora and fauna, no doubt), his expectation of another blissful homecoming to the woman he so adored was quickly overturned. The Bible does not record for us the scene when Eve met him that day, but we can be sure that Adam realized immediately that all was not right in Eden, and relatively certain that he, with his exceptional intellect, was quick to apprehend that Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit – the only potential source in Eden of “trouble” (a concept hitherto not experienced). Eating the fruit had instantly rendered Eve spiritually dead, had begun the inevitable process of physical degeneration, and had destined her for the carrying out of God’s sentence of death in eternity (barring gracious intervention on His part). However we need not assume that her *body* had undergone any noticeable change that would have alerted Adam to the new situation. What did change though, what had to have changed significantly was her *behavior*. She was no longer perfect, and she knew it. She was now mortal, death was inevitable, and she knew it. She had been terribly deceived, was alienated from God and the life of God, and knew it. Her eyes were indeed opened, opened to all the fear and horror which her new status as a sinner bequeathed. Eve was in grave trouble, wracked with guilt, and terribly afraid. The state she must have been in when Adam came home we can scarcely imagine.

The mention scripture makes about Adam’s part in the fall is that Eve “gave [some of the fruit] also *to her husband with her* and he ate”. These two short but all important prepositional phrases speak volumes about Adam’s reaction to the alarming situation he encountered upon returning home that evening. The Bible is quite clear that Adam did not eat the forbidden fruit because he was deceived about what the consequences of so doing would be (1Tim.2:14). Adam knew very well that, by taking the forbidden fruit from his wife’s hand and eating it as she had done, he too would suffer the three-fold death whose initial consequences he could plainly see being played out in the woman he loved. Confronted by the love of his life, his perfect soul-mate, weeping inconsolably and having passed irrevocably beyond the pale of paradise, Adam now faced an impossible decision. How could he possibly desert the one person who made him

complete, his own flesh and bone? She was helpless, desperate, and in dire need. How could he just turn his back on her and walk away? The twin phrases “to her husband with her” make it clear enough that such was essentially Adam’s thinking: he was “her husband”, and would stay “with her”. Adam did not flee at the sight of his fallen wife. He did not separate himself from her for a time to think things through. He did not consult God about the situation. Adam’s compassion for this woman he loved so deeply was such that he stayed *with her*, consoled her, listened to her, gave in to her, and ate the fruit. Adam was not bullied into it; he was not nagged into it; he was not tricked into it. Contemplating the possibility of a life without Eve, and with his heart breaking to help her, he cast his lot in “with her” and thus joined her in death.

The romantic and noble aspect of Adam’s decision should not inspire us. He was every bit as wrong as Eve. In fact his conduct was the more culpable, because he knew exactly what he was doing. Both of our first parents betrayed God (Eve in ignorance, Adam in cognizance), and both transgressed for essentially the same reason: failure to believe and trust Him. Eve was deceived about the nature and the content of what He had said; Adam failed to trust Him, failed to believe that for a God who could create an Eve, nothing would be impossible. We are, of course, not told what “would have happened” or “might have happened” had Adam waited on the Lord instead of immediately trying to solve Eve’s problem for her in the only manner he could devise (i.e., by joining her in her sin), but with the entire Bible as our guide, the one thing we can say for certain is that “nothing is impossible for God” (cf. Gen.18:14; Job 42:2; Jer.32:17; Matt.19:26; Lk.1:37; 18:27). By assuming, as Adam may have done, that his added sinfulness would force God to “reevaluate”, the first man stepped into exactly the same trap of arrogance, the same false assurance, that had originally trapped the devil: i.e., assuming himself to be irreplaceable.<sup>38</sup>

While it is altogether right and proper that we point out the failings of our first parents in this connection, it also behooves us to realize and understand that none of us would have done any better. Eve was the first human being ever to experience temptation, and the attack launched upon her by the devil represents some of his “best work”. With our current perspective, well-informed about Satan and his devices as we are, we might have done better, but then *so would have Eve*. Assuming a complete ignorance of the devil and his wiles, which of us would venture to say that he or she would not have succumbed to this most clever assault? Adam’s shoes are likewise very difficult for any of us to try on. What he lost when Eve fell was the perfect relationship, the perfect person, perfectly designed for him. We cannot really even imagine the duress such a loss put him under, and it would be well to admit that any of us would almost certainly have reacted in the same way.

Although the first Adam failed when confronted by Satan’s considerable deceptiveness, and although all of his progeny ever since has (with one exception) confirmed this dubious heritage, the Last Adam has left for us a stirring example of how to contend with the devil’s temptations. Christ met Satan’s best efforts not in a paradisaical garden, but in a desert at the end of a forty day fast and vigil. Satan’s threefold temptation of Christ was his masterpiece of deception, and

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<sup>38</sup> See Part 1 of this series, [Satan's Rebellion and Fall](#).

only Christ could have withstood it. But we would do well to note *how* He withstood it. The Son of God, the Word of God Himself, met the devil's charge with the shield of the word of God, refuting Satan's words with God's words. There can be no better brief for the importance of learning what the Bible says and means (the basis, along with belief, of Christian spiritual growth) than the example left for us by our Lord. Every subtle temptation of the devil is laid bare for the lie it is and rebuked – by scripture (Matt.4:1-11; Mk.1:12-13; Lk.4:1-13):

1. The temptation to become distracted from God's word:

And the tempter approached Him and said, “***If you are the Son of God***, command these stones to become bread”. But He replied, “Man's life does not depend on food only, but on every word that comes from God's mouth” (Deut.8:3).

Matthew 4:3-4

Christ was hungry, not having eaten for forty days, and certainly had the power to turn stones to bread. This would have been a very easy act to justify, under the circumstances, and to rationalize. But our Lord had been led into this test by the Holy Spirit, so that it was without any doubt the will of God for Him to endure this trial, not to bring it to an abrupt end at Satan's urging (Matt.4:1; Mk.1:12; Lk.4:1). The hard thing about this test, the really difficult part of it, was not the hunger (although it is fair to say that any of us deprived of food for forty days would be sore pressed to resist the opportunity to eat when it suddenly arose after such a long period of time). No, for Christ, the deceptive part of this temptation was the challenge thrown in His face by Satan: “***If*** you are the Son of God”. For the devil's implication is crystal clear: the ***real*** Son of God wouldn't be deprived like this, and would certainly be able to call upon God's power to supply His legitimate needs. Christ's intense hunger is merely a contributing factor to the temptation, for it is really ***the fact*** of His deprivation, used by Satan to reproach Him, that constitutes the real test. Christ's situation here is analogous to that of Job's. Job's comforters failed to understand that his suffering was not deserved, but was instead part of God's plan (the ultimate divine compliment, in fact). These men self-righteously assumed that intense suffering had to mean God's disfavor (punishment for sin), and Job, who had up until their arrival endured the most intense persecution at Satan's hands without faltering in his faith, was finally tripped up by the stinging reproaches of his erstwhile friends. Satan's “if” is an attempt to break down our Lord's resolve in the exact same way by prodding Him into “proving” the devil wrong.

But our Lord, instead of focusing on the words of the tempter (as Eve had done) or over-focusing on the reproach (as Job had done), gave instead his complete attention to the word of God. Jesus' quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3 is riveting (as is every one of His scriptural answers to the devil's challenges). He does not make Satan the issue, nor His hunger, nor the devil's challenge to His true status as God's only Son. Our Lord makes God the issue. And how does He do so? By quoting a small part of God's truth that cuts through the devil's lie like the sharpest sword. For Christ's selection of scripture proves more than that He had memorized much (if not all) of the Bible as it existed in His day (the Old Testament). Christ's absolutely appropriate choice of quotation shows that He also ***understood*** it and ***believed*** it. Unbelievers can memorize scripture.

Only for believers can the Bible truly become an irresistible sword, and *only* to the extent that it is understood and believed.

Our Lord's handling of the devil's temptation is the perfect model for us to follow. Christ's impeccable understanding of and absolute belief in God's word gave Him the ability to rebut this deceptive and "right sounding" suggestion of the devil. For Jesus understood and believed *from the Bible* that sometimes it is God's will for us to endure privation and hardship, in order to teach us that His word is more important than anything else, even food. In the context of Deuteronomy 8:3 (the verse Jesus quotes), the Israelites experienced hunger that they might learn through this temporary privation to trust God, to believe that whatever His reason for bringing on their short term suffering, He had only their best interests at heart. The use of this quote shows that our Lord understood that it was necessary for Him too to put God's word and God's will first, and to "learn obedience through the things He was suffering" in order to prepare Himself to face the ultimate reproach, the reproach of the cross (Heb.5:8; cf. Heb.2:18; 4:15; 11:26; 13:13).

## 2. The temptation to test God:

Then the devil took Him to the holy city, stood Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "*If you are the Son of God*, throw yourself down, for it is written that 'He will command His angels concerning You', and 'They will lift You up in their hands lest You strike your foot against a stone'" (Ps.91:11-12). Jesus said to him, "It is also written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'" (Deut.6:16).

Matthew 4:6-7

Satan's second temptation of Christ is very similar to the first. Once again, he is attempting to provoke Christ into disobedience by challenging Him to prove His standing as "the Son of God". But instead of inviting Christ to abuse His special powers to do something legitimate (that is, eat when hungry), this time Satan entices Him to take an ordinary human action (i.e., jumping) to do something illegitimate (that is, without authorization to put the Father in a position of having to rescue Him).

Satan's second temptation is more than just a wily variation on the theme of the first. The devil sharpens this particular arrow by giving it the cachet of apparent scriptural support. If the promise of angelic protection has ever applied to any human being, it certainly applied to our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Matt.26:53). Indeed, immediately after Christ's successful negotiation of these temptations, the angels did minister to Him (Matt.4:11; Mk.1:13). This challenge to our Lord's standing as the Son of God is at once more direct and yet also more subtle. Only the Son of God could expect to be rescued after following this suggestion of the devil. Now Christ was and is the Son of God, and was well aware from His perfect knowledge and understanding of scripture that these verses quoted by Satan did indeed apply first and foremost to Him as part of the body of prophecy in the Old Testament which looked forward to the coming of the Messiah for its complete fulfillment. For our Lord to refuse to jump *might give the appearance* that He lacked faith in this divine promise – to everyone except God, that is (and to those who have adopted God's point of view as Christ did perfectly). Please understand that such a temptation

would be of no effect if directed against you or me, because we are not *the* Son of God, and because we do not possess the perfect faith that Jesus did. You see, Christ *knew* that the Father would deliver Him and that the verses with which the devil was taunting Him referred uniquely to Himself. He could easily refute the devil's insinuation that He was not really the Messiah by merely jumping and thereby showing Satan that he was dead wrong. The devil was daring Jesus to "prove" that He really believed it, and our Lord could easily have done so. But our Savior knew full well that the issue at stake was not His own honor and glory, but the honor and the glory of the One whose mission He had come to fulfill (Jn.7:18; 8:50; 8:54).

The living Word of God, a prodigy in the understanding of the Bible at age twelve (Lk.2:41-52), was now, after two additional decades of the most intensive study of the word of God, impervious to Satan's guileful misapplications of scripture. He would have to be. Throughout His earthly ministry He would encounter similar reproaches that would tempt Him to end His personal suffering and silence the blasphemous insinuations of those who opposed Him. Perhaps the most galling of these (very similar to Satan's taunt) would come as He hung on the cross, dying for the sins of those who were abusing Him:

***"If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!"***

Matthew 27:40b

### 3. The temptation to give allegiance to someone or something besides God:

Then the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Then he said to Him, "All these I will give to you, if you fall down and worship me". Jesus responded to him, "On your way, Satan. You shall worship the Lord your God and worship Him alone" (Deut.6:13).

Matthew 4:8-10

It is often said that everyone has his price. Certainly we all have particular areas of lust where bribery of one sort or another will be more likely to succeed, and areas of weakness where pressure will be more likely to make our resolve crumble. Satan, as we have remarked before, is a shrewd observer who makes a point of gathering intelligence to use against us (cf. Job 1-2; 1Pet.5:8). The report he received on Jesus Christ, however, was most disheartening, for beyond His true status as a flesh and blood human being, there was absolutely no sin, no weakness, and, very importantly, no area of ignorance about the word of God. Nevertheless, the devil crafted a subtle strategy. He would offer our Lord something many human beings have desired, but no one has ever possessed: world rulership.

Again, however appealing *we* may imagine this offer to have been, it would have been much more so to Christ, for to this He had been born (Jn.18:37), and He was well aware of the scriptures that proclaimed this as His birthright (e.g., Ps.2:8-9). This time the devil's "if" is not directed toward Christ's status as Son of God, but presents instead a condition for fulfilling the offer: the worship of Satan. It is one of the devil's favorite tricks to make us think that our receipt of blessings is dependent upon *him*, and our prior accommodation with him and his evil



world system. Whenever we fail to acknowledge God as the source of all we have, we play right into Satan's hands, and so become vulnerable to his manipulation. But Christ fully understood and believed that only the Lord God is worthy of our worship, for from Him only do our blessings flow (Deut.6:13).

Eve became distracted from the word of God and opened herself up to the devil's deception (temptation #1). Adam put God to the test by throwing his lot in with Eve, vainly hoping that he would be "lifted up" before crashing to the ground (temptation #2). Both of them failed to trust God alone for blessing (provision of a wonderful life without the forbidden fruit in Eve's case, provision of a wonderful life without the woman in Adam's case), and so effectively gave Satan their allegiance in place of God through their respective sins (temptation #3). Satan's use of these same temptations on Christ failed, because the word of God pulsed through Jesus' heart, not merely as empty phrases, but as living truth, fully understood and fully believed.

We can only resist the devil by following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and taking the word of God into our hearts as He did, listening to it, learning and understanding it, believing it then acting upon it in faith (Jas.4:7). Eve didn't listen well enough; Adam listened, but didn't believe well enough. When push came to shove, neither of them was strong enough in faith to maintain their allegiance to God under the pressure of the devil's assault. If we are to grow up spiritually and gain some measure of safety against Satan's deceptions, we must commit ourselves to the word of God, to understanding it and to making it our own through faith, because only in this way can we hope to follow in the footsteps of Christ, and avoid the stumbling blocks that tripped up Adam and Eve.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked, so they sewed together fig leaves and made garments for themselves.

Genesis 3:7

The opening of Adam and Eve's eyes, that is to say, their sudden understanding of good and evil, was a tremendous shock and disappointment. What their now opened eyes perceived was that, by their disobedience of the Lord God's command, they had forsaken what was good and embraced what was evil. Their newly developed perspicacity of good and evil was only of any use *because* they had sinned and were now sinful beings. Eating the forbidden fruit immediately changed them and their progeny forever, polluting their previously perfect bodies with the corruption of inherent sin. From now on, sin would always be "crouching at the door" (Gen.4:7), so that an ability to distinguish between what was sinful and evil from what was good and right would be essential to the survival of the human race. For mankind to be inherently sinful without a conscience or consciousness of sin would make our continued existence as a species impossible. Equally tragic would have been the complete absence of any shame, any recognition of evil, any possibility of remorse (and therefore of any potential repentance, should God provide a way). Viewed in this light, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in addition to providing a way for man to show his free choice for God (by abstaining from it), was also a most gracious provision, because, in the event of sin, it would, along with sin, provide the capacity to distinguish and recognize sin. Recognition of our sinfulness is always the first, essential step

toward seeking relationship with God, for it is the conscience that separates the devil's lie from the truth of God, the truth that we are sinners and in desperate need of His grace:

[The nations] demonstrate that the law has been written in their hearts when their conscience testifies against them, and their thoughts alternate between allegations or even excuses.

Romans 2:15

Along with the common human heritage of utter sinfulness, we also possess, thanks entirely to the grace of God, a natural consciousness of that sinfulness. This realization is gracious because it provides motivation for all who will respond to God to seek Him for a solution to the devastating problem of sin, sin that controls us, sin that destines us to physical death, sin that, unless it should somehow be blotted out, means our ultimate damnation for all eternity. It is the consciousness of sin and death that moves us to seek God.

God must, however, be sought in the proper way, His way. Nothing man can do to atone for sin or to make up for sin or to cover up for sin will ever be sufficient for God. Only the blood of His beloved Son is acceptable payment. No ritual, no good deeds, no amount of praying or working or singing or chanting or self-effacement or fasting or self-affliction or any other activity of human energy will bring us so much as a single step closer to our God. Only what *He* has done for us through the sacrifice of His Son can save us from our sin, and only if we accept that sacrifice in the way He has ordained: the simple obedience of believing, of trusting, of following Christ, today, tomorrow and forever.

Adam and Eve were conscious of their sin. Instead of some grand vision, their opened eyes saw only their own guiltiness, their own sin. Their nakedness now testified against them, for now they had a sense of shame (unnecessary in a world without sin). But awareness of sin is merely the first step in the process of being reconciled to God. Our actions cannot do it; we have to wait for God to do it; we have to put our faith, our trust in Him, in the work of His Son, a fact for us since the cross, a promise for all those before the cross. Adam and Eve, however, did not wait for the Lord God to return to the garden. They decided instead to "fix" the problem on their own. They would "do" something to remove the problem of sin. Nakedness was the symptom, and that could be readily alleviated; it could be easily covered up:

"If I have concealed my sins like Adam, hiding evil in my heart ..."

Job 31:33

So the first man and woman set to work busily manufacturing garments out of some suitably large leaves that graced one of the garden's trees. After they had donned their new invention, their consciousness of sin did not leave them, nor did the sin they have since passed down to their descendants through their now mortal bodies. But at least they had managed to cover the problem up. Maybe God wouldn't notice. Maybe God would find this sufficient. While their actions and thinking may seem ridiculous to us now, we should realize that covering sin up with fig leaves, the quick fix laid upon the problems of the devil's world by which mankind thinks to

score points with the Almighty and somehow reconcile this evil world to Him, has been in vogue ever since and is proceeding with a vengeance in our own day. Satan loves to encourage people, especially Christians, to become involved in schemes and activities that will “solve” the problems of this world, fig leaves on an incurable cancer of evil that can only be eradicated by the return of the Lord Himself.

But how is one to know what is a genuine Christian act and what is merely playing into the devil’s “do-gooder” hands? Specific applications must be left to you, dear reader, for only he who is actually involved in any given situation is capable of judging aright. But a good “rule of thumb” is that anything you do yourself (a cup of water offered in the Lord’s name) has the most chance of being legitimate service to the Lord, whereas anything that is done through an organization you do not control (i.e., outside of your local church) is highly susceptible to being coopted by one of the devil’s schemes. Ultimately, only Christians who are growing spiritually, seeking God and drawing nearer to Him through His word, have any serious chance of consistently discerning what is truly good in God’s eyes (Rom.2:18; 14:22; 1Cor.11:28; 2Cor.13:5; Gal.6:4; Eph.5:10; Phil.1:10; 1Thes.5:21):

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by this renewal of your thinking (i.e., through obedience to the word of God; cf. v.1), so that you may discern what God’s will for you is, namely what it is good, well-pleasing, and correct [for you to do].  
Romans 12:2

### 3. The Judgment:

Then they heard the voice of the Lord God [as He was] walking about in the garden at the [time of] day when the evening breeze [came up]. So Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God in the midst of the garden’s trees. Then the Lord God called out for Adam and said to him, “Where are you?” And Adam responded, “I heard your voice in the garden and was afraid because I was naked, and so I hid myself”. Then He said, “ Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree from which I told you not to eat?” Then Adam replied, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave to me from the tree and I ate”.  
Genesis 3:8-12

The appearance of the Lord God in the garden quickly melts away the false confidence of our newly sinful first parents, dissolving their self-delusion, leaving only fear in its place. The sudden realization that their feeble attempt to cover over their sin is woefully insufficient puts the fear of God into them, and they rush to hide from Him for whom nothing is hidden (Heb.4:13). Their reaction is entirely understandable, for which of us would not find his rationalizations similarly shattered, his fig leaves similarly withered, if he were to be suddenly confronted by God Himself?

“Woe is me, for I am ruined. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

The effects of sin which had been so obvious in Eve's behavior are now similarly evident in Adam's response to the Lord God's interrogation. For Adam, whom we saw only hours before choosing to suffer the consequences of mortality with Eve in place of an immortal life without her, now, in his new, sinful state, has no qualms about attempting to pass off all the blame to the love of his life. Though often portrayed as amusing, the seriousness of Adam's betrayal should not be overlooked. For all Adam knew at this point, this "selling out" of his wife for his own sake might well have brought down upon Eve a swift and terrible vengeance from the Lord God. But Adam, now under the influence of the sin that has infected his entire body, is much more concerned about the consequences for himself than he is with the consequences for the woman for whom only shortly before he had sacrificed everything.

Adam's words, "The woman whom You gave to be with me", besides redirecting the blame toward Eve, also constitute a none too thinly veiled reproach against God. Creativity in shifting responsibility away from ourselves and pointing the finger at others (especially at God) is an all too common characteristic of sinful humanity. Adam's intimation that God is to blame for his sin because God gave him Eve is breathtaking. Is God somehow responsible for our sin and the trouble we bring on ourselves because He has graciously given us life and physical bodies and resources – without which sin would be impossible? Heaven forbid! This is a case of the pot reproaching the Potter (Is.29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer.18:4-6; Rom.9:20-21). Nevertheless, trying to hold God responsible for our evil *just because He made us* is a ploy one finds below the surface of nearly all evil rationalizations and is even older than Adam, for this outlandish accusation is at the heart of all the devil's lies.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And she replied, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate". So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are accursed, more than any beast or wild animal. You shall go on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. And I shall place hostility between you and the woman, that is, between your seed and her Seed. He will attack you head-on, but you will attack Him from behind".

Genesis 3:13-15

In an attempt to avoid responsibility, Adam had responded in a most circuitous fashion to the very direct question asked of him by the Lord God ("Did you eat?"), prefacing his response with a self-serving defense that sought to shift the blame (Eve gave me the fruit and You gave me Eve). Eve's response to the Lord God's interrogation, however, is a good deal less tortured and convoluted. Despite the fact that she is given more latitude to respond ("What is this you have done?" as opposed to "Did you eat?"), Eve simply states the facts: she was deceived by the serpent and she ate. For good reason Adam had found it necessary to offer a defense before answering God's question. His sin had been committed in complete cognizance of the specifics of God's prohibition, of the issues at stake, and of the consequences his act would have. Adam had no excuse, so in his guilty sinfulness he tried to manufacture one. Eve, on the other hand, did have an explanation (if not an excuse) and so had no reason to embellish her story. This is

not at all to say that Eve's conduct was excusable (sin is sin, whether committed in full knowledge or suborned by deception). But Adam's sin was clearly inexcusable under any interpretation. The fact that Adam sinned in complete cognizance of what he was doing (and what effect it would have) is the essential reason why sin passes to all of us "through Adam" rather than through Eve (i.e., through the male line: Rom.5:12-21).

The serpent, as we have seen, was (and is) just an animal. But since he was Satan's chosen vehicle for this first assault on mankind, the serpent was cursed for this association. He became (and remains to this day) a fitting symbol for the devil and his snake-like, deceptive attacks upon mankind. God's judgment upon the serpent is thus most appropriate, for the reduction of this lithe and subtle creature to the status of crawling vermin serves as a reminder of and a memorial to the devil's deceitful method of attack, lying in hiding, waiting like a viper to strike whenever we present him with the opportunity.

The Lord God's further promise of future hostility between the woman's Seed (Jesus Christ: cf. Gen.22:17 with Gal.3:16) and the serpent's seed (all who follow Satan, and, in particular, antichrist) is a further confirmation that this judgment has broader implications. The prophecy of Christ's direct assault upon the devil (accomplished at the cross), and Satan's continuing tactics of sneak attack against Christ preeminently, and also His followers (in all generations of human history, and especially during the Tribulation under antichrist) is often called the *protevangelium*, because it constitutes the first occurrence of the gospel message (i.e., a promise that God would Himself provide His own Seed to right mankind's wrong and crush the adversary in the process). As the Seed of the woman, Christ is here clearly foreshadowed as taking on true humanity in order to attack the serpent head-on. This prophecy to destroy in a most direct fashion the devil's power over sinful mankind by striking at the serpent's head was fulfilled at the cross, where the hold Satan had won over mankind at the fall was finally broken:

Therefore since "these children" (i.e., believers given to Christ by God: v.13) have a common heritage of flesh and blood, [Christ] too partook of these same [common elements] in a very similar fashion (i.e., not identical only in that He was virgin born and so without sin), in order that **through His death** He might put an end to the one possessing the power of death, that is, the devil, and might reconcile those who were subject to being slaves their whole lives long by their fear of death.  
Hebrews 2:14-15

When Adam and Eve sinned, a **threefold death** became the new reality of their lives:

1) They instantly experienced **spiritual death**, that status where we are, because of our sin and unrighteousness, accounted dead by a righteous and holy God who can in His perfection have nothing to do with us any longer (except on His own terms of grace: salvation from our predicament through our acceptance on a non-meritorious faith-basis of Christ's saving work on the cross). Eating the forbidden fruit contrary to the explicit prohibition of the Lord God destroyed our first parents' relationship with Him (spiritual death), leaving them helpless to alter or remove this alienation (as their fig leaf experiment demonstrated most clearly). Reconciliation

would come, but on God's terms, as Adam and Eve both accepted and trusted in the Lord God's promise of the Seed.

2) Their bodies were also instantly rendered mortal. The process of decay and degeneration began immediately upon partaking of the fruit. Under the conditions that pertained in this antediluvian world, Adam and Eve and many of their children had, by our standards, exceptionally long lives, but even living a thousand years seems infinitesimal when compared to immortality. Eating the forbidden fruit contrary to the explicit prohibition of the Lord God also eventually destroyed their bodies (*physical death*). Even the restoration of their relationship with God through their faith in His promises would not erase this appointment with death (Heb.9:27), but God had promised them the Seed who would save them through His sacrifice. The "coats of skin" with which the Lord God would clothe them (Gen.3:21) in preference to garments of their own creation are a clear foreshadowing of Christ's work on the cross: in contradistinction to our own pitiful acts of what we would call good (fig leaves), God will only accept the blood of Christ as payment for our sin. The animals slain, their blood spilt to clothe us in our need, are pictures of Christ's death on our behalf (and such animal sacrifices would remain the dominant symbol for His death on the cross until the day of its fulfilment). As our first parents did, we too must stop relying on the arrogant acts of our own tainted "goodness" and trust instead in God's solution, Jesus Christ, if we are to live beyond physical death through the resurrection (Heb.2:14-15).

3) As a consequence of their spiritual death, Adam and Eve were alienated from the life of God (Eph.4:18: cf. Rom.5:10; Eph.2:12). As a result of their impending physical death, they would not be able to abide forever in this world (Heb.9:27). Already condemned, therefore, and facing the end of temporal life, *eternal death* was the sentence that now hung over their heads, inevitably and inexorably approaching – unless they accepted in faith God's solution in the Person of the promised Seed.

Though not always articulated, and more often than not deliberately obfuscated, this threefold death that is our common human heritage eventually impinges upon everyone's consciousness. Our conscience teaches us how far we fall short of the holiness a perfect God demands (Rom.2:14-16), and we are only too well aware of the horrible and tragic end of life that is our collective lot. The fear and the terror we humans feel in regard to death is sign enough that, on some very basic level, we understand that through our own devices no good result waits on the other side. This fear is the devil's ace trump. Through it he has entrapped uncounted millions, coaxing them into a variety of false religions that promise relief and solution, but without Christ. Jesus alone gives us the power to escape this fear through faith in Him and His resurrection.

To the woman He said, "I will surely multiply for you the labor-pains that follow conception: in pain you will give birth to children (lit. "sons"). For you will desire your husband, so he will rule over you".

Genesis 3:16

Along with the natural consequences of their sin (the threefold death), Adam and Eve receive, as the serpent did, specific additional judgments that suit the nature of their individual transgression. Eve's first additional punishment, pain in childbirth, is a relatively straightforward one: sinful people in a sinful world beget children tainted by sin from the moment of their conception (Ps.51:5), so that it is only fitting that the process of bringing them to birth should be a painful one.

The second penalty is far more controversial and requires a few words of explanation. The Hebrew word *teshuqah* (תְּשׁוּקָה), translated "desire", does not refer here to the female libido. Marriage in the garden of Eden had been a pleasant and an easy proposition. Adam may have been the titular "head of the family", but, as we have seen, issues of authority would doubtless never have come up in such a perfect paradise between two sinless people. Outside of the garden, however, and between imperfect people, clearly delineated hierarchies are essential for all organizations, including marriage. By virtue of his original position as God's representative on earth, on the basis of his priority of creation, and because of the fact that he had not been deceived, Adam would be heir to the authority position in marriage as would his male descendants – ***provided there would be any marriages*** (1Tim.2:13-15). It is well to ask what incentive Eve (or any of her female descendants, for that matter) would now have to put themselves voluntarily under someone else's authority, especially given the fact that said person would also be imperfect and sinful. Part of Eve's penalty, a curse that has been passed down to women throughout the millennia (in the same way that the serpent and Adam also pass down their individual penalties), is this "desire" for a husband, a marriage, and children (the meaning of the phrase "you will desire your husband"). This is not to say that men do not desire wives, marriages, and children, or that women would not do so without this curse, but while marriage is a sacrifice for all parties, in many ways it constitutes a far greater sacrifice for the woman, because she must give up so much of her freedom to make it work. Without the "desire" of Genesis 3:16, we may surmise that far fewer women in the history of the world would have been willing to contract marriage at the price of having their husbands "rule over" them.

And to Adam He said, "Because you obeyed your wife and ate from the tree about which I gave you the commandment not to eat from it, the ground is cursed on your account. In painful toil you will eat from it all the days of your life. When you go to eat wild plants, you will find the ground producing thorns and thistles for you. And bread you shall eat [only] by the sweat of your brow, until you return to the ground from which you were taken. For you are dust, and you will return to dust".

Genesis 3:17-19

Adam's punishment also fits the crime. Although he had enjoyed all the wondrous fare of paradise without expending any effort whatsoever, under the pressure of the potential loss of his spouse he ate the one fruit from which the Lord God had commanded him to abstain. As a result, by this one act of disobedience, Adam brought an end to the free bounty of the garden of Eden. From this point forward, Adam (and his progeny) would have to work for a living. The ground would no longer yield its crops without the effort of cultivation, and even the vegetation which would bear fruit apart from Man's husbanding, would still yield it grudgingly, amid thistle and

thorn. And the end of a life of toil would not be victorious accomplishment, but the disintegration of one's body and of all one had accomplished upon the earth. Adam had understood before he ate the forbidden fruit that death would result, but this last curse, the vanity of necessary effort, was perhaps the most grievous and demoralizing of all (cf. Eccl.2:22-23 et passim). Thanks be to God that our labor in the Lord is not in vain (1Cor.15:58; Gal.6:9; cf 1Cor.3:10-15)!

Then Adam named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of every living person. Now the Lord God made clothes of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, "Behold, Man has become like One of Us in respect to his knowledge of good and evil. So now, lest he also keep stretching forth his hand and taking [fruit] from the tree of life and [so] live forever ...". So the Lord God expelled Man from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. Thus He drove Man away, and placed in front of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword to block access to the tree of life.

Genesis 3:20-24

We have mentioned above the coats of skin as part of the promise of the woman's Seed to come. Animal sacrifice was not only commanded in the Mosaic law. It existed throughout the age of the gentiles and may be traced back to this original point of origin (cf. Gen.4:4; 8:20-21; 15:8-21). The bloody loss of life is a clear picture of the horrendous death that Christ would die on our behalf to rescue us from death (1Cor.5:7b). We are helplessly exposed to the ravages of sin – until God clothes us, taking away the shame of our nakedness through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

We have seen how through their sin, Adam and Eve brought upon themselves and upon us their children the threefold curse of death (the spiritual death of alienation from God; the inevitability of physical death; and the condemnation of eventual eternal death – apart from the provision of salvation). We have also seen how they brought upon us all the gender-specific curses treated above. But there was one final consequence to their sin. By their disobedience to the Lord God's commandment, they also forfeited their right to reside in the garden of Eden.

It would be unthinkable for spiritually dead, sinful creatures to live forever in paradise. Such a state of affairs would amount to a festering cancer on the universe that would never be resolved. Eternal life can only work for perfect people (Adam and Eve) or people made perfect (as eventually we shall be through our faith in Jesus Christ: cf. Heb.12:23b). Paradise without perfection would be unstable, for God would eventually have to act to resolve such a situation (through fiery judgment). Furthermore, without the sure and certain knowledge of an impending physical death, human beings would have little motivation to consider their sinful manner of life and their need for a Savior to deliver them from sin and death.

Inasmuch as Adam and Eve had not refrained from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil despite their state of perfection, it was not likely that sinful mankind would voluntarily abstain



from the tree of life after being expelled from Eden. God therefore placed “the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword” at the garden’s entrance to prevent any further attempts on the tree of life. The reference here is to the chariot of God with its sword-like flashes of lightning, carried by the cherubim (cf. Ezek.1:13).<sup>39</sup> As His holy throne, this chariot symbolizes the presence of God Himself, and it is a sad final commentary on the fall of Man that the presence of God which had once been such a blessing to our first parents had now become an awesome and terrifying sight, blocking their access to eternal life, filling their consciences with guilt and the consciousness of impending judgment. Thanks be to God that He Himself has provided His children with a way back to the tree of life through the sacrifice of His own Son Jesus Christ on our behalf: He endured the judgment due us on the tree of the cross, that we might eat once more the fruit of life eternal.

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<sup>39</sup> See Part 1 of this series: [Satan's Rebellion and Fall](#).

## V. Satan's Hollow Victory

What Satan did to Adam and Eve was very similar to what he had previously done to a large number of his fellow angelic creatures, that is, convince them of the desirability (and advisability) of rejecting God's authority. That such a course of action was tantamount to accepting his authority in place of God's was a fact lost on Adam and Eve (and possibly not completely comprehended by many of his angelic followers). But it was a fact certainly central to the devil's plan. Indeed, such is his typical *modus operandi* today: first pry the intended victims away from God (and anything else good he or she may be holding onto), then they will follow the path of evil as a natural consequence of their rejection of the good.

By the same means, then, that he used to gain control over a large part of the angels (i.e., deception), Satan regained a measure of control over the earth he had once (temporarily) ruled:

And the devil said to Him, "I will give you all this power and all their glory – for it has been **surrendered** to me and [so] I [can] give it to whomever I please."

Luke 4:6

The Greek verb *paradidomi* (παραδίδωμι, "surrender") in the passage quoted above means that Satan's reign over the earth was not wrested from God or awarded to the devil, but was rather relinquished by Adam, abandoned, abdicated, given over by default, or "surrendered". The devil's policy of undermining God's authority, then corrupting others and thereby gaining control over them (and all they possess) proved just as effective on Adam and Eve as it had on those angels who followed him in rebellion against God. As a result of the first man's dereliction of duty, "the whole world now lies within the control of the evil one" (1Jn.5:19). By listening to a creature instead of his Creator (Rom.1:25), Adam forfeited a large measure of mankind's dominion over planet earth. As they walked out of the garden, Adam and Eve were not only entering a world characterized by pain, toil and ultimate physical death, but also a world where the devil's influence would be great and pervasive. This was no Eden, but a world where only the unseen protection of God would prevent them from being annihilated by the satanic forces swirling around them, a world where only the diligent seeking of God (in response to the consciousness of sin they now possessed from their knowledge of good and evil) would lead them away from the otherwise inevitable path of death.

Satan had now brought Man down to his level. Just as the devil and his followers were essentially on parole from "death row", awaiting God's administration of the sentence of death already passed against them, so Man finds himself under a similar stay of execution after the fall, albeit one limited by the relative shortness of human life. However, the devil was not allowed to gloat and enjoy his hollow victory for long. For, as had been the case in his earlier rebellion, he may have won a battle, but he lost the war. The immediate offer of a Savior (in the Seed of the woman, His sacrifice adumbrated in the coats of skin) took Satan as completely by surprise as did the destruction and re-creation of the earth. Once again, God in His omniscience had everything planned before the devil had even conceived his counter-attack. Because they do not share the intellectual, temporal and material limitations of mankind, the angelic creatures who

followed Satan were not prone to have a “change of heart”, but rather were confirmed or “hardened” in their opposition to God by the time they rebelled (as we saw in part 1 of this series; see also section IV.1.a above).<sup>40</sup> Man, on the other hand, born in relative ignorance, and subject to severe temporal and material limitations, upon the realization of his mortality and sinfulness has the potential of responding to God’s redemptive offer of grace in Jesus Christ, our Savior who was “given over for our transgressions, but raised for our justification” (Rom.4:25).

The final battle was now on in earnest. The devil instantly sized up the new situation: without a concerted effort on his part, the generations of human beings to come would in large numbers turn to God, and the promised Savior. The Last Adam destined to restore what the first Adam had lost, would come to save them from their sins and wrest back the control of the world Satan had only so recently regained. The end of such a process could only be what the devil had feared from the unimpeded procreation of the first man and woman in paradise: the replacement of himself and his followers with a new race of obedient creatures (only now they would choose *to follow* God instead of choosing not to rebel against Him), the reestablishment forever of God’s rule over the earth, and the final execution of his sentence: the lake of fire for all eternity. All future satanic strategy, therefore, would be designed to prevent these eventualities. In the next part of this series, we shall examine Satan’s desperate counter-strategy, the world system established to blind the eyes of mankind and oppose to the utmost all those who would seek God’s truth.

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<sup>40</sup> See Part 2 of the series [Exodus 14: Hardening Pharaoh’s Heart](#).