

JESUS CHRIST: THE POINT OF IT ALL II

What The Lord Jesus Did

The bottom line is this: the Lord Jesus made creation possible by His Death on the Cross of Calvary.

a) His Eternal Role in Creation

We have already seen that the Lord Jesus is Eternal God too just like the Father and the Holy Spirit. As such, He had a role in creation. We already know that He was the One of the Three Who actually created everything (Jn 1:3; Col 1:16-17) just as He will be the One also at the end of Time to create the New Universe (Mt 25:31-46, cf. Rev 20:11-21:1) where God will live eternally with all His faithful family (Rev 21:3).

What we will pay close attention to right here is how the Lord Jesus made creation possible in the first instance. That is, knowing what creature free will would result in, how was a perfect God going to get the perfect creation? The answer to this will also demonstrate how the Lord Jesus is also "the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24, 30).

(i) Creature Free Will: Creature free will meant that to a limited extent angels and men would be able to choose whether or not they would obey God. That is, just as God possesses an unlimited Will (Dan 4:35) - that is, He lacks any external limitation upon Himself and is totally free to do as He pleases (Is 45:5-6; 46:9; 1 Cor 2:16)-, He gave certain of His creatures a similar but significantly limited will (Ps 82:6; Jn 10:34,35; Gen 1:26-27). Each angel - until the summary judgment upon the world that existed prior to the creation of human beings - possessed the ability to decide who they wanted to be in relation to God (Ps 8:4-5; Heb 2:7-9; 1 Tim 5:21; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6; Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; Rev 14:10). Man was later created with the same ability. As is clear from what has just been said, this ability was limited (Gen 1:26-27). It is constrained by God's Own Will and His Own Being. There is only One True God so that there is truly only One Unopposable Will, not many. It is God's Own Decree to allow each of these special creatures the right and opportunity to decide whether to challenge His Authority or submit to It.

(ii) Satan's Rebellion: The existence of creature free will is what made high treason against God possible just as it made willing obedience to Him possible as well. Satan took advantage of this ability in his turn to rebel against God and attempt to commit a coup d'etat against Him (Is 14:13-14).

Satan was created as a cherub, the highest rank of angels. He was also the only cherub at the time.

Ezekiel 28:14,16 NASB

[14]"You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

[16]"By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire.

As the context of the above passage indicates, he was created with every benefit that a creature could possibly wish for:

1. He was the high priest of the angels (Eze 28:13-14, cf. Ex 28:2-29).
2. He was the touchstone of perfection in the entire universe (Eze 28:12).
3. He was full of wisdom (Eze 28:12).
4. He was perfect in beauty (Eze 28:12).
5. He was built with music as part of his makeup (Is 14:11; Eze 28:13 KJV).

As a cherub, Satan was the Guardian of God's Throne and the protector of His Holiness (Is 6:2-3; Rev 4:8). That does not mean that there was anything unholy in the world of that time. His position was symbolic. He was the one tasked with maintaining a remembrance of God's necessary separation from creation. God is not part of or even similar to creation in any way. Creation is His Invention. He made it out of nothing and is completely apart from it. This is important for creatures because of how easy it is for those possessing free will to forget that God is not like them. That is easy to understand from how many times the Bible emphasizes God's Uniqueness (see, for example, Is 55:8-9 and Ps 50:21). It was Satan's job as the Guardian/Covering Cherub to preserve that truth among his fellow angels.

It is important to remember that angels at this time, although created holy, possessed free will and thus could go against God's Authority if they wished. This was something that Satan's position at the time had the capacity to dissuade. If any thoughts of rebellion began to be hatched in any angelic mind, a reminder of God's "otherness" from creation had the potential to put an end to the idea. However, it was the very one who was made to guard that Holiness that violated it.

As we see from Isaiah 14, Satan conceived in his own heart the lie that he could become God. Obviously, as we see above, it is not possible for creatures to ever become God. God is not a creature. He was never made. He has no beginning and no end. There is no limit to Him in any particular. These things are not true of creatures. Creatures exist because God made them. Creatures are limited in their ability by God's Own Chosen purpose for them. In other words, it is impossible for anything which is not already God to become God. This was what Satan's position was supposed to remind every creature of. But himself chose to ignore it and reach for the unattainable.

Isaiah 14:13-14 NASB

*[13]"But you said in your heart, 'I **will** ascend to heaven; I **will** raise my throne above the stars of God, And I **will** sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.*

*[14]'I **will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; I **will** make myself like the Most High.'*

In these words, Satan's self-delusion is abundantly manifest. In rejecting the truth that he was graciously granted the authority to preserve, he embraced a lie of his own creation and thus set the stage for an ill-fated rebellion against a truly unassailable God.

Once he made his choice, it only followed that he would start usurping God's Authority over his fellow angels and trying to win them over to his side. This is clearly shown in even his activities among the human race. He is called the Tempter because of his use of his great wisdom to seduce fellow creatures to sin against God and join his rebellion.

Ezekiel 28:16,18 NASB

[16]"By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire.

[18]"By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you.

The trade spoken of here refers to his campaigning among the angels to seduce them to join his cause. How did Satan succeed at seducing fellow angels who lived in a paradise universe and lacked absolutely nothing into rebelling against such a powerful God? This is a fair question to ask but our answer here will be, just like this discussion of Satan's rebellion, a summary.

As must be clear so far, the universe of that time was perfect and the angels were created without the material limitations with which man would later be burdened in his own turn. They lack

material bodies. This is important. The angels were created spirits. They certainly had form of some sort but they did not possess physical bodies (Ps 104:4; Heb 1:7). But they lived in and ruled over a material universe where there were mountains, stones and all sorts of gems and pearls as our passage in Ezekiel 28 shows. It is not a stretch of imagination to think that there were animals and plant life in that universe as well. It only makes sense since "universe" or "creation" or "world" always has one clear meaning throughout the Scriptures. Those words describe the totality of all things that were made by God. And it only follows that what existed before God judged the universe of the time before man was created must be similar to what existed after and to what we look forward to in the Eternal State.

Animals exist in today's universe. They also exist in Heaven where we hear of horses, at least. There is not much reason to think then that they will not exist in the world to come or that they did not exist in the world that was before man.

Those animals were not spirits without bodies like the angels. They possessed physical bodies. Their existence then was sufficiently different from the angels' that they were curious about it and examined it with great interest as they are demonstrated to do with the Church at least (1 Pet 1:12; 1 Cor 4:9; Eph 3:10-11). For some of them, that curiosity was fanned into lust. That desire to experience existence in a material body was what gave them motive to rebel. But what gave them the gumption, the daring to do so? For consider that without the limitations of a physical body, they had far greater spiritual knowledge than we do and did know that such a rebellion was apt to gain God's summary judgment. But Satan did have an answer.

God is a perfect God. Satan himself was God's deliberate proof of that. He was the measure of perfection in that universe. That was what he hinged upon to sell his idea that God would not be able to execute Judgment against the rebels. Since there was a perfect number of angels created (Ps 147:4) and angels were incapable of repentance once they committed to a choice, their rebellion would result in a less than perfect number of faithful angels which would (in the thinking of Satan and his fellow rebels) put God in an impossible dilemma:

- Destroy the rebels because He is a just God OR
- Forgive them because He is a loving, merciful God

If God destroyed the rebels, Creation would be damaged because the number of angels would become imperfect. How was God going to replace them? Would He create new angels? Given that angels were what they were, what guarantee would there be that they too wouldn't rebel even if it were consistent with God's Nature to try to patch up creation like that? Also, God loved them, so would He really destroy them? On the other hand, if He forgave them without somehow rehabilitating them and accounting for the damage they had done, then His Justice would be violated.

With things at such a pass, it seemed clear to the rebels that they could get away with their rebellion. They could not be rehabilitated or replaced and God could not summarily destroy them or the entire creation since He loved them, so He would leave it to them to do with as they pleased. Consider that unbelievers really fantasize about such a possibility as well: being able to do as they please without God's interference, that is, to be gods unto themselves. This was the rationale that Satan sold to them. It amounted to this: that God would be powerless to judge them (Job 22:17).

A third of the angels were persuaded by Satan in his conspiracy and began to ruin the earth with their lusts run wild (as we in our turn have come to see in the world of humans). They entered into full-blown rebellion, taking possession of animal bodies they pleased and eventually going on to try and create bodies that fit their unrighteous desires. This went on until it was clear that no other angel was willing to join their rebellion. Then, God destroyed the universe of that time with a universal deluge. This is the state in which we find things in Genesis 1:2.

This is the first result of creature free will. Satan and a third of the angels used their free will to commit high treason against the God Who made them and gave them everything good and worthy of desiring. What He did not give - His Place as God and material bodies - were things which were impossible to confer and things which were not good for His creatures to have. A material body only made life harder for those who had it - as was later demonstrated in humans. A material body limits its possessor's ability to perceive and experience spiritual realities. It is only after the testing phase of time when every creature has made their choice about God that material bodies will be transformed to become able to perceive and experience spiritual reality. So, the angels had an excellent deal. But it takes tremendous arrogance every time for a creature to say to the Creator, "why did you make me this way?" (Rom 9:20). And rebellion against the Creator is ever arrogance.