



Eden

John H. King

EDEN

John H. King

Genesis is the "Beginning" of all things. Eden, therefore, is a story where everything starts. Solomon tells us, "That which has been *is* what will be, That which *is* done is what will be done, And *there is* nothing new under the sun."

Ecclesiastes 1:9

Copyright © 2025 John H. King
All rights reserved.
ISBN: 978-1-304-24004-0

The Greek Text used is the 28th Revised Edition of the Novum Testamentum Graece based on the work of Eberhard and Erwin Nestle. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013.

The Hebrew Text used Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1997

Where not specified, the text used is the Authorized Version. The Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible ('the KJV'), the rights in which are vested in the Crown in the United Kingdom, is reproduced here by permission of the Crown's patentee, Cambridge University Press.

The KJV is in the Public Domain.

The following list of English translations might help to identify the limited use of them in this work. [<https://solarmythology.com/translations/bibles.htm>]

- AMP Amplified Bible 2015
- AMPC Amplified Bible Classic Edition 1965
- ASV American Standard Version 1901
- BBE Bible in Basic English 1965
- CEB Common English Bible, 2011
- CEV Contemporary English Version 1995 (NT - 1991)
- CSB Christian Standard Bible 2016
- CWB Clear Word Bible 1992
- ERV Easy to Read 2015
- ESV English Standard Version 2003
- ICB NCV International Children's Bible, New Century Version 1986 (NT - 1978)
- JPB J.B. Phillips New Testament in Modern English 1958 (Revised 1972)
- KJ21 Twenty-First Century King James Version 1994 (NT - 1992)
- KJV AV King James Version (also known as Authorized Version) 1611
- MLB NBV Modern Language Bible also known as New Berkley Version 1959 (NT - 1945; NT revised 1969)
- NASB New American Standard Bible (NASB) 1971 (NT - 1963; Revised 1996)
- NET New English Translation 2005
- NIrV New International Reader's Version (NIrV) 1996
- NIV New International Version 1978 (NT - 1973)
- NKJV New King James Version 1982
- NLT New Living Translation 1996
- NRSV New Revised Standard Version 1990
- TEV Good News Bible also known as Today's English Version 1974 (NT - 1966; Revised 1993)
- YLT Young's Literal Translation 1862 (Revised 1887, 1898)
- WIL Williams New Testament in the Language of the People 1937; Reprinted 2000 as Millennium edition.

To All Those Who Miss Eden.
[Romans 8:23]

Contents

Preface.....	1
Introduction.....	4
The Theology.....	15
Eden.....	33
God's Image.....	42
The Tree of Good & Evil.....	51
The Snake.....	61
Naked.....	67
Animal Sacrifice.....	74
Monogamy.....	79
The Sabbath.....	87
Heaven.....	91
Pleasure.....	94
Epilogue.....	99
Appendix.....	103
Adam's Sin.....	104
Middle Knowledge.....	108
From Bohu to Adam.....	111

Preface

Through my years in ministry I sought to find those aspects of character that identified a Christian from others. I thought that if we are, indeed, “new creatures [a new creation: 2 Corinthians 5:17] in Christ, there should be something about our behavior that reflects that truth. “Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” [Ephesians 4:24].

To this end, I underwent a serious study of every “sin” listed in the New Testament, looking for those forms of expression that are *absent* from someone who claims to represent the Savior to their world. But not even I was able in this regard to claim any higher level of Christian purity than most. I wanted to believe, for example, Christians are never vengeful or unforgiving. Christians are by nature merciful and loving people. Since I began with the supposition that Christians attend church, I falsely assumed that everyone who attended regularly and for years could be considered “believers” or “Christian” and were candidates for such a study.

I became more and more aware of the factions within the “Church” which more often than not represented real schisms; I became, consequently, disillusioned. I was too many times caught in the middle of these political whirlpools and not always a shining example of Christian propriety and virtue. I was also aware that other believers—many—have emotional baggage. Some live with PTSD (not just from war but through other forms of abuse). We also hurt physically through a myriad of afflictions, for which healing, though promised, seems unattainable. Some are persecuted just because they claim Christ as their Savior. And our theology is spotty, at best. Most of what we think we know is some other man’s “scholarly” guess at

Preface

things. What alone is sure is our salvation and our faith in Christ!

Do we blame Adam? Christian theology attempts to excuse failures as “old nature” still lingering about even though we are Christian. God’s grace has its work cut out for it—to bring us to the high standard of God’s holiness to which we should measure up! [1 Peter 1:16]. Good News [God’s grace] must be on display in a believer’s testimony as only good news can be represented with an undying hope, an enduring peace, an unconquerable love, an unquestioning faith, and an unquenchable joy. This might be a high bar but we can hurdle it, else Jesus would never have told us to [Mark 13:10; 16:15].

My quest to learn and live the Bible, God’s Word, now was up against a ferocious headwind more challenging than the current the salmon fight to return to their spawning grounds. I know, my thought is more poetic than practical [and lousy poetry at that] but the discouraging note was that the Bible was becoming—to coin a phrase—theological rhetoric, a study in language and nothing more. No doubt in my mind, the snake that pestered Eve was relentlessly after me, too, pointing out how Christian beliefs and faith are weak substitutes for living a happy, well-adjusted, life. People, in the devil’s opinion, would be better off with developing their own, personal, moral code, and not keep trying to live up to God’s! We know he is wrong!

I was able, however, to fall back to a defensive position from which I might continue to study the message of Scripture and, at least, imagine that out there are a few believers that are progressing closer and closer to that position of holiness. I appeal to God’s encouraging words to Elijah, “I still have left in Israel seven thousand followers who have not bowed their knees to Baal” [1 Kings 19:18 NET]. There are probably a few more than this in the Church.

All this led me back to Eden. Somehow, on a subconscious level, I have been nostalgic—no! ... more like the Welsh word *Hiraeth*, which is homesickness tinged with grief and sadness, over the lost of Eden. We may not realize how we miss it other than an unexplained longing for something “other” than this world. You, perhaps, as I, might want what Adam and

Preface

Eve gave up in exchange for knowing what an experienced evil “feels” like. I am reminded of a 16 year old (years back) that wanted to “get drunk” just to see how it felt. What was Eve thinking! Was she experimenting with our future! Perhaps, now, drugs is that universal elixir that promises a spiritual experience that in a misdirected subconscious way users are trying to get back to Eden. Drugs cannot, because Eden was [and still is] only, and always, God’s idea.

Introduction

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” - Revelation 2:7

I have been imagining what life might have been like for Adam and Eve in Eden before that fateful meeting at the forbidden tree. I was going to titled my thoughts, “Eden Before the Fall” but on second thought, just, “Eden” because there was no “Eden” *after* Adam and Eve sinned.

Where is Paradise Now?

The Hebrew word “Eden” means “luxury, dainty, and delight” attested not only by the spelling [BDB, 727] but by the translation into Greek used in the Septuagint for this word “luxury.” It is not incidental that the term “luxury” or luxurious living” took on the aura of a sinful way of life in the New Testament. “In [this word] lies the notion of excess, of wanton, dissolute, self-indulgent, prodigal living...” Professor Trench explains [Trench, 200]. The Greek Lexicon for the Septuagint (Compiled by Johan Lust, et al—no pun intended) calls Eden, “The Garden of Delight,” a luxurious paradise [Lust, 1197].

In Nehemiah 9:25, the word speaks of reveling and rioting, the offspring of a careless life of luxury. He narrated, “And they took ... a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells dug, vineyards, and olive-yards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness. Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against you [Lord], and cast Your law behind their backs, and slew Your prophets which testified

Introduction

against them to turn them to You, and they wrought great provocations.” Moses exposed Israel’s weakness of luxurious living in Deuteronomy 32:15, “Jeshurun (Israel) waxed fat, and kicked: you art waxen fat, you art grown thick, you art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.”

Luxury is difficult to enjoy without being under its spell that, genie-like, will tempt one away from God. This probably, at least, hints at a reason the Garden of Delight was disassembled (probably went to weed) and was no longer spoken of until God revives His promise of it at the end of time [Revelation 2:7].

When the New Testament speaks of happiness, fulfillment, joy, and the like, other terms are used—some of which beg a deeper more “heavenly” meaning to be appreciated. Luxury has been relegated to the lost and not found [Revelation 18:14].

God Planted a Garden

As Gardens go, Eden was bedecked luxuriously in an “ornamental” way with a variety of plants and trees. How could it be less since God planted it [Genesis 2:8]. Who would have thought the Creator a horticulturalist, but indeed, that has been one of His outstanding gifts to us. His green thumb is no accident. He picks the perfect spot to plant which the Dictionary of Hebrew terms translated “a fertile slope” in Isaiah 5:1 [BDB, 1032].

Eden was “Eastward” reads the King James Bible or “in the east” which we now call the “near east” and geologists call “the fertile crescent,” in the region of Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria, together with northern Kuwait, south-eastern Turkey. According to Jared Diamond, a professor of physiology from UCLA in his bestseller on the fate of human societies, here—in our Eden—was the cradle (the beginning) of civilization. Fertile is not an overstatement; of the 56 large seeded grass species, 32 are found only here [Diamond, 140]. Diamond summaries, “thus, the crops and animals of the Fertile Crescent’s first farmers came to meet humanities basic economic

Introduction

needs: carbohydrate, protein, fat, clothing, traction, and transport.” He then makes a salient point that the farmer does not get the credit for all this—Adam wasn’t the expert gardener here; God was! Diamond concluded that it wasn’t man’s genius that brought this about. He found the garden already there when he arrived! “We see that the many distinctive features of the Fertile Crescent’s climate, environment, wild plants, and animals together provide a convincing explanation [that man does not get the credit for the ‘green thumb’].” [Diamond, 143]. For believers this is God’s creative handwork.

Diamond is not thinking “creation” in writing. His interest is exclusively scientific observation, but he is describing Adam’s world as God offered it to him and Eve. “Thus, agriculture could arise in the Fertile Crescent from domestication of locally available wild plants, without having to wait for the arrival of crops derived from wild plants domesticated elsewhere. But God wanted Adam to manage His garden—which is what domestication is all about: “and the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” [Genesis 2:15]. Until Adam came the Bible reads, “The LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, [because] there was not a man to till the ground” [Genesis 2:5]. Two of the eight founder crops (emmer and einkorn wheat) could not have been domesticated anywhere [else] in the world than in the fertile Crescent [in Eden], since they did not occur wild anywhere else” [Diamond, 141].

Milton’s “Paradise Lost”

One of England’s greatest epic poets, John Milton, wrote the tale of our first parents, before their act of disobedience. Milton imagines the bliss Adam and Eve enjoyed together, which drove Satan’s hateful rage to madness. The devil knew the two must be separated; and finding Eve alone tempted her to eat the forbidden delicacy. Adam warns Eve in Book VIII [let me respectfully make the spelling of some words more readable):

What hath been warned us, what malicious Foe

Introduction

Envyng our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
His wish and best advantage, us asunder,
Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need;

Adam is not sure if it is God or mankind Satan hates more! But unfaithfulness to God leads to Adam's and Eve's first marital conflict:

Whether his [Satan's] first design [plan] be to withdraw
Our faithful obedience to God, or to disturb
Conjugal Love, then which perhaps no bliss
Enjoyed by us excites his envy more;

Eve, according to Milton, was enjoined by Adam to stay near him:

Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.

Some Time Earlier?

Milton imagines that God spent time with Adam (Book IV), explaining Creation, why the Sun, Moon, and stars were created, why there is night and day, as well as what not to do every 7th day and why.

Adam named the animals [Genesis 2:19-20] and we might assume was introduced to the floral gardens and their many fragrances, as well. Adam's seeming taxonomic interest appears to be contextually part of his quest for a mate. [So much for context!] "Within the 34 Phyla that defined the basic structure of all animal life, there are approximately 30 million species." [R. May, *Scientific America*, October 1992]. It is more likely that as Adam named each animal (probably by phylum) he became increasingly disenchanted with the mantra: "a dog is a man's

Introduction

best friend.” He was still quite lonely—not to mention what God knew about “replenishing” the earth.

It might be thought that since all this took time, Adam enjoyed some time with His Creator in personal strolls in the cool of the Eden evenings [Genesis 3:8]. It does seem less reasonable to assume that immediately the day after their creation, they would have committed the sin that had them driven from paradise. Milton’s epic verse suggests to me that Adam learned a lot about “nature” which he later shared with Eve:

To whom [Eve] our general Ancestor [Adam] replied.
Daughter of God and Man, accomplished EVE,
Those [The sun and moon] have their course to finish, round the
Earth,
By morrow Evening, and from Land to Land
In order, though to Nations yet unborn,
Ministering light prepared, they set and rise;
Lest total darkness should by Night regained
Her old possession, and extinguish life
In Nature and all things, which these soft fires
Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
Of various influence foment and warm,
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
On Earth, made hereby apter [more able] to receive
Perfection from the Sun’s more potent Ray.
These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
Shine not in vain, nor think, though men were none,
That heaven would want spectators, God want praise;

[There is a chorus of voices singing God’s praise in the skies and all of nature. Adam explains to Eve that the sounds of the night are comforting—like insects calling their mates—not threatening]:

Millions of spiritual Creatures walk the Earth

Introduction

Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night: how often from the steep
Of echoing Hill or Thicket have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to others note
Singing their great Creator: oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk
With Heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number joined, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.

But, perhaps, the most interesting part of Milton's story is Adam and Eve, themselves, and their relationship, because most questions surrounding those first moments of time should show an inquisitiveness as to what made these 2 the perfect couple—since God pronounced everything “good” [Genesis 1:31]. What was lost of happiness when they left Eden?

[All this while the happy couple strolled the garden hand in hand on their way to a place where the grass caressed their sleepy forms until the Sun awakened them.]

Thus talking hand in hand alone they passed
On to their blissful Bower; it was a place
Chosen by the Sovereign Planter, when he framed
All things to man's delightful use; the roof
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade

[Milton describes the indescribable beauty of God's handiwork]:

Laurel and Myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
ACANTHUS, and each odorous bushy shrub
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,

Introduction

IRIS all hues, Roses, and Jessamine
Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; underfoot the Violet,
Crocus, and Hyacinth with rich inlay
[em]Broidered the ground, more colored then with stone
Of costliest Emblem:

[Milton added a personal observation, that a perfect night's sleep
means no mosquitos and no animals to disturb]:

other Creature here
Beast, Bird, Insect, or Worm durst enter none;
Such was their awe of man. In shadier Bower
More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned [imagined],
...
[They indulge themselves with memories of when they met
while passing away the hours in blissful embrace]:

Espoused EVE decked first her Nuptial Bed,
And heavenly Choir's the Hymeneal sung,

[Hymeneal - the wedding hymn sung by the bride's train as she
was escorted to the house of the groom.]

What day the genial [kindly] Angel to our Sire [Adam]
Brought her in naked beauty more adorned,

Here's How I Saw It.

When God made Eve, the Master plan
Was to have her be as a help for man
So His genius in one master stroke
Formed her thus. When she awoke
She found her Adam sitting there
In breathless wonder with but a stare

Introduction

Upon his face; her sinless guile
threw him a kiss and broke a smile.

God's Plan for Eden

The larger question might be: Was Eden—what we call—a “one off,” an Adamic epoch, the initial dispensation, God would create to kick things off? Or was Eden heaven in microcosm—God's plan for our eternity with Him?

Was Adam all along destined to fail in order to conclude “all in unbelief, that He [God] might have mercy upon all”? [Romans 11:32]. Was Adam created to fail in that he had a carnal side to his nature?

We have a saying: “There go I, save for the grace of God.” God seemed to step back here to allow Satan his moment. Perhaps, Adam like Job was being considered in conversation between God and Satan. Could we replace Job's name with Adam's?

“... The Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Have you considered my servant [Adam], that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and eschews evil?” [Job 1:7-8].

Only, Adam failed God.

What About Heaven?

Are we created for Heaven or was Heaven made for us? If we were made for Heaven, there is a sense in which personal freedom is severely restricted, an almost robotic like existence in which we do what God wants whether we want to or not. But, conversely, if Heaven was created for us, we get to love God there freely from the heart and our obedience or service to God is not predetermined but willingly offered.

Introduction

Eden Part of a Heavenly Vision?

Was Eden a special divine dispensation, a garden setting, only to introduce us to Adam and his crime against God's goodness? Or was Eden a vision of what God ultimately wanted to, and will, bring about in the Kingdom of Heaven? Was Eden designed to be a lesson only, an historically accurate metaphor, teaching us our need of a Savior? Was Eden about the "Fall" of Adam and nothing more?

The creation was damaged by the first man, Adam's, disobedience which was "made right" at Calvary in the New Covenant. According to N. T. Wright in his work, "Paul" (The Apostle). Wright argues, "...The Creator and Covenant God can be relied upon to act in accordance with His creating power and His covenant fidelity, to put the world to rights" [Wright, 25]. This suggests that Eden was the beginning of something that would be completed at Calvary. It is the task of the Bible student, then, to find out what that "something" was [Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:45]. Paul compared Adam to Christ. It is sufficient to understand here that the entrance of sin into the world was now addressed on the Cross by the Savior's death. He was the "last" Adam [1 Corinthians 15:45] but could the creation story of our first parents and Eden hold more insight into God's thoughts toward us? "thoughts of ... a future" [Jeremiah 29:11].

Drs. Keil and Delitzsch in their commentary on Genesis 3 wrote, "With the expulsion of man from the garden of Eden, Paradise itself vanished from the Earth. God did not withdraw from the tree of life its supernatural power, nor did He destroy the garden before their eyes, but simply prevented their return, to show that it should be preserved until the time of the end, when sin should be routed out by the judgment, and death abolished by the Conqueror of the serpent (1 Corinthians 15:26), and when upon the new earth the tree of life should flourish again in the heavenly Jerusalem, and bear fruit for the redeemed (Revelation 20-21)." [Keil & Delitzsch, 108].

Introduction

All Things Created For Christ

Paul wrote, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth,... all things were created ... *for him*” [Colossians 1:16]. Could these words apply also to Eden?

Bishop Lightfoot interpreted the words “for Him” to mean “*unto Him.*” The eternal Word [Christ] is *the goal of the universe*, as he was the starting point. [Hebrews 12:2]. It must end in unity as it proceeded from unity: and the center of this unity is Christ.” [Lightfoot, 155]. The good professor explained, “[Christ] is not only the beginning but also the end of creation, not only the first but also the last in the history of the Universe.” [Lightfoot, 154]. This, at least, suggests that Eden was not just a geographical setting in which to “shoot” the movie of the first sin. Jesus closed our Bible with these words, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” [Revelation 22:13]. So, is Eden the beginning of something more than the fall of Adam?

None of this directly answers the question: If we could go from Heaven to Eden or Eden to Heaven would the similarities be strikingly obvious to our hearts? What we do know about the “Simplicity of God” Professor Adonis Vidu in his work, “*Atonement, Law and Justice*” wrote, “All of God’s attributes are in the background of all of his actions; ... all of his actions will exhibit a unity and consistency worthy of perfect agency.” [Vidu, 248]. Simplicity, then, yields the following rule: every aspect of a divine plan, every phase, every act and moment is eternally present when He begins. “(Christ’s) temptation, teaching, obedience, miracles, crucifixion, descent into hell, resurrection, glorification, ascension, (and His parousia) His return, cannot be read as stand-alone (acts) They are all part of a single pattern which stretches *from creation to eschatological glorification.* [Italics added]” [Vidu, 243].

There is some legitimacy in imagining Eden to have some relationship to heaven, but with some differences, of course. There will be no marriage or given in marriage there. But in Heaven we will be the *Bride of Christ*. When God told Adam that the marriage bond is a complete and perfect—the 2 shall be

Introduction

1— unity, was it between him (Adam) and Eve only (before they fell into sin) or was it all about Christ and the Church in God's mind?

There are aspects of this short tale of 'Beginnings' that should suggest that some of the conditions we live with may have resulted from Adam and Eve's disobedience and point to what they might have been—and what will be again in a new Eden when God restores His creation [Romans 8:22-23].

This Work

In this short work it is not my purpose to propose any theological changes to what fundamentally we already know and believe about Eden and our first parent's life in their sweet innocence before the unthinkable happened. But I wonder if we have looked close enough at the text. Does God see you and me hiding in the trees? We have possibly assumed Adam and Eve, because they were first, would take complete liability for everything that went wrong. Like Peter I might have vowed to be faithful—I know so little about me!

But the good news is the restoration of Eden. That's coming!

The Theology

“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day” - Genesis 3:8

I think we have a legitimate claim to many of our questions because, we, too, are human. Placed in a similar situation, we might imagine what would interest us or the questions we might ask, if we were Adam or Eve. And there is only one person to ask—God! Those cool evening walks which we now call prayer would provide the perfect opportunity to ask.

There are details in the record of Adam and Eve’s departure from Eden that raise additional questions that may have a bearing on faith because we know—or ought to know—that nothing God says or does is either reckless, out of rage, or out of an uncontrolled passion. Nor does He do or say anything that has only immediate significance. His words and actions have an eternal impact on His creation. “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” [Psalm 33:6]. “He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.” [Psalm 105:8].

So Adam and Eve might not fully understand what God meant when He warned, “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shalt not eat ... for in the day that you [do] ... you will surely die” [Genesis 2:17]. They have never been to a funeral or know grief or sadness. Perhaps, when the serpent lied, “You won’t die” [Genesis 3:4] Satan was not contradicting God, which is not what crafty demons do, [Matthew 4:6] but explaining Him in a way that the word “die” has no real significance. [Some believe God lied because Adam and Eve did not—like Ananias

The Theology

and Sapphira—drop to the ground lifeless corpses. But “sin, when it is finished, brings forth death” [James 1:15].

In Genesis 3:18 God either introduces *thorns* and *thistles*, for example, or He decided they should grow where they are not wanted as a consequence of Adam’s disobedience. One might take Galatians 6:7 literally, “whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” Perhaps the “rose” is a symbol of this lesson, much like the rainbow is of promise. Perhaps, in Heaven, roses will not have thorns. The lesson here is that the consequence of sin is a harder life. Jesus promised in Matthew 11:28-29 that His yoke is easy, His burden is light, and we can expect life “easier” serving Him than serving sin.

In Genesis 3:24 God “drove out the *man*; and he placed at the *east* of the garden of Eden *Cherubims*, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

The language of Scripture almost wants us to ask questions to stimulate our interest and our faith, to encourage us to meditate on it [Psalm 1:2]. Why “the man”? Just the man, Adam, and not Eve? Or does the Hebrew mean “mankind” which is common in language? Then again where Adam goes now Eve “tags along” as a consequence of their sin? “Her desire is now to her “man.” [Genesis 3:16]. She went from his helper to a form of servitude. In a military sense she was reduced in rank. And whereas most students of the text are probably interested in what the relationship is now between them, I am far more interested in what she lost! For Adam (before his sin) gardening was a natural interest of his. Another mantra: Flowers never grow old! Our interest in God’s creation is, in fact, eternal. If God asked me to tend a flower bed in Heaven, I would be most blessed because, in heaven, there are no thorns and thistles. I assume if it came with the sin, it goes with the sin.

I am also interested in this strange marital math $1+1=1$. Which we shall take up later: [Genesis 2:24] “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Beside Adam having no parents to “leave” what effect does sin have on this henotic relationship? What is $1 + 1 = 1$?

The Theology

Cherubim are usually God's entourage [Ezekiel 1] to be distinguished generally from the Seraphim or angels who execute God's judgment [Revelation 16]. Such a distinction cannot be maintained absolutely since Cherubim in attendance around God does not in itself describe all they do for Him. Here Cherubim are holding swords with flames dancing off their blades not to kill but to prevent Adam and Eve from eating of the Tree of Life and living eternally in their present sinful condition. Nothing could be more merciful. In my theology: Everything God does is merciful! Dr. Barclay in his work on *"Paul & the Power of Grace"* characterizes God's gift as a singularity. This could be an example of Psalm 91:11 "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." What would it mean if they got back in and starting chewing on the Tree of Life! [Genesis 3:22-23].

I find it interesting that the Bible locates these angels to the "east." Could Adam attempt a return from the west or north or south? Why "the east"? No doubt an entrance into Eden would have opened up to them eastward. The Septuagint makes no mention of location or direction but we can assume God's strategy to prevent them from returning was well thought out.

A major part of Genesis 3 is taken with the changes that resulted from their disobedience—matters that should concern us, as well. ... And will in later chapters.

And speaking of "sin." Did God plan for it?

Supralapsarianism vs. Infralapsarianism

There is a theological term for this: "Supralapsarianism" or God decreed sin to enter into the world without being the author of it. Adam was created to fail. Did God, indeed, render the Fall *certain* by which all deserve to be condemned? "The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" [Galatians 3:22].

Or should we endorse the Infralapsarian view—that all men are sinful due to the Fall but God created Adam with freedom of will and capable of overcoming the temptation to eat

The Theology

of the forbidden tree? “He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” [Ephesians 1:4].

These are big philosophical ideas—too big for my brain; so, I think of them differently: Supralapsarianism means “God planned for evil even though He didn’t create it.” Infralapsarianism means: “God only allowed for evil to enter the world.” Some go so far as to believe that God didn’t even know evil would be “a thing.” I don’t agree. Whichever view you take, understand that what God planned was to enjoy a love relation with us. And maybe we should be asking ourselves a different question: Does love require trust [faith and faithfulness] and can these flourish and grow better where the temptation to break that trust or be unfaithful must be overcome. I tried to capture this thought in a poetic way”

And then of love: such haunting doubt;

I dare not guess what that’s about

For love fights strongest in the fray

But rests content at close of day.

When love is challenged, love stands strong

Against the dangers of all wrong.

In later years and peace ensued

Love’s silence can be misconstrued.

The question here is whether or not Adam had free will or was his actions predetermined by God. If Adam were only a biological being, we might wish to believe that his and Eve’s response to the fruit of the forbidden tree were instinctive. Or we might want to believe that any temptation will defeat our efforts to overcome it if the tempter is persistent enough. Everyone has a breaking point. Grace will become available for us post-Calvary but was it available, then, for Adam?

To offer an analogy: if you were inventing a board game, which would come first: The board or the rules? If you come up with the rules first, the board must be made to make it possible to follow those rules. If you design the board first, you then write the rules that allow you to use the board in the game with a view to winning.. These are quite different: the board represents

The Theology

freedom of moves [because all board games are about the moves you make to win] whereas the rules represent restrictions: how you cannot move. Both give structure to the game but when you name the game, you define it by the board because you define it by “the winning move” not by the rules. The rules are there to restrict you in some fashion. Card games are often set up this way where the rules can be “personalized” by the group playing the game but defined by the cards used. The rules do not define the game; the deck of cards does. If we want more freedom to make certain moves in your game [freedom of will], you limit the rules [restrictions] that pre-determine how you cannot move.

In our analogy: Everything God created including Adam, Eve, and the Trees in Eden are the game board. The rule was simple: don't eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil! What we want to know is did God say, “Here is something I don't want my creation to concern themselves with—the difference between good and evil” and then He had to make a garden and put a man in it to apply this rule? Or did God create Eden and man in it and the freedom to move about wherever Adam and Eve chose to go within that world of pure luxury, but one rule to follow to win: Avoid the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? The first is Supralapsarian, the latter, Infralapsarian.

Look at it politically: A government that cares about its people, creates laws that support the rights of the people, freeing them to live their lives in safety. The people come first. If the government does *not* care, the laws are made to control the populous restricting freedom. The laws come first! We can look at the Genesis Story also another way: Did God create Eden for Adam (Infralapsarianism) or Adam for Eden (Supralapsarianism)?

Before we proceed, there is a Biblical example of this: Did God create the Sabbath for man or man for the Sabbath? Jesus taught, “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” [Mark 2:27]. The Sabbath is the rule. The Christian life is the board “game” If the Sabbath was made for us, We came first! This means that the rules governing the Sabbath day were *not* predetermined. Jesus gets to heal a withered hand or 2,

The Theology

or grab lunch in a wheat field, or do what David did when he ate the Shewbread in the temple [Mark 2:23-26; 3:2]. The Savior was recognizing the “spirit” of the law and not confining himself to the letter of it [2 Corinthians 3:6]. The Sabbath “rule” was never meant to control us but to free us from our labors, to give us a time of rest and the opportunity to worship God.

If we say that Adam was made for Eden, we mean he was made to be vulnerable to temptation, since the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was in Eden and we must believe that the snake does not get in unnoticed by God. In English: Adam was “set up.” This suggests a more supralapsarian explanation. The rules or conditions were created first by God, making it harder for Adam to succeed. If, however, if Eden was made for Adam, the temptation is just as real but Adam has free will. He doesn’t have to make that move, visiting the forbidden tree!

Are All Things Predetermined?

We introduced this subject defining Supralapsarianism compared to Infralapsarianism but this begs the question “How much did God know and when did He know it?” How should we understand the “Foreknowledge of God”? Is prophecy an act God preordains in His foreknowledge? If God *knows* something will happen, how can man’s freedom of will prevent it from happening? Would not this make God a liar, when God cannot lie!

If God intended Adam to fail, could Adam foil the divine plan by avoiding the Forbidden Tree? But did God know that the snake would pursue Eve until she gave in? If we argue that God *did* know, we are supralapsarian. If we are infralapsarian, we might want to believe God did *not* know any of this. Can God know something will happen but not be said to either cause it or permit it to happen? In the mind of some: foreknowledge means predestination.

Gregory Boyd in a work entitled “Divine Foreknowledge” edited by James Beilby and Paul Eddy, wrote, “Saying that someone carried out a predestined or foreknown ...

The Theology

event is much different from saying that someone was predestined or foreknown to carry out a[n] ... event. Scripture affirms the former not the latter." [Beilby, 22]. For example: the rulers who crucified Jesus [Acts 2:23]. They did not know they were fulfilling prophecy. Boyd is an Infralapsarian.

We can comfortably assume that there is some freedom of will which Adam and Eve exercised in taking a forbidden delicacy to eat, else we might conclude God was implicated in their disobedience. This would be an idea no Christian theology could advocate. The language of Isaiah 5:2, much in keeping with the general mindset of every prophet, as well as other Biblical writers, is that there is an underlining personal responsibility attributed to every action. When God planted a vineyard, referring to His choosing Israel, "He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes." Israel was free to follow God but chose to be unfaithful and worship idols.

Obviously, one might argue from a gene theory that no one can plant one thing and grow another. Even Jesus used this science in Matthew 7:16 to argue, "you ... know them by their fruits." You can't plant domesticated grapes and get wild. "Everything after its own kind" is rule number 1 — Genesis 1:11. So Isaiah's analogy breaks down a bit but we still know what he meant—and that's the point. (Compare Romans 7 where *we* die and our marriage is dissolved with the Law; so now *we* get to remarry: married to Christ.)

I am still reluctant to conclude that foreknowledge with God means predetermined with Him—not any more than it does with you or I. [As God's adopted children He has a lot of loving plans for us but we will be willingly participating in them as well.] Foreknowledge [God's omniscience] still for me does not necessarily mean predestination. Just because God knows something doesn't mean He makes it happen. Said another way: Every aspect of our lives is *not* predestined. We have "some" freedom of choice. Am I wrong? In this work we are really talking first about Adam and His lovely bride, Eve.

In Jeremiah 19:5 in the New Living Translation (but any translation says the same) Our Lord says of Israel's

The Theology

unfaithfulness, “They have built pagan shrines to Baal, and there they burn their sons as sacrifices to Baal. I have never commanded such a horrible deed; *it never even crossed my mind* to command such a thing!” [Italics added]. The impact of this language might be better understood in straight Hebrew: “such things did not rise in my heart” and the Septuagint interprets, “Neither did I design them in my heart.” Both phrases speak of an intention (which would be something predestined to happen) which God never expressed in word or deed! What Israel did here, they did on their own!

But are these scriptural references telling us that some things are not predestined by God to happen because He didn’t know whether or not they would happen? In Jeremiah 3:7 the Lord argued, “I said to Israel after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not.” The Scripture does not say whether or not God *knew* beforehand how Israel would act—although, there is a sense in which it appears obvious. We are not philosophers nor did God write a philosophical treatise in the Bible that requires college degrees to understand. There is such a thing as common spiritual sense [1 Corinthians 2:10]. “God is not mocked” according to Paul [Galatians 6:6]. Matthew Henry interprets “He cannot be deceived” He knows what grows from what is planted. He created the thing! We believe in the omniscience of God.

Predestination, theologically, can only be supported by interpreting some of the New Testament Scriptures to mean this. But, I contend, the New Testament message is “grace.” Grace as God’s work, such as in the matter of our adoption, on behalf of our eternal salvation, leads some to presuppose a form of predestination that negates freedom of will.

But this argument is too static, too simple, to represent the interplay of personalities, thoughts, and hearts of 2 persons in relationship. Here’s a real-life example: Some men would probably argue that marriage took their freedom away because the wife’s involvement in decision making translates too often into doing things her way. The wife argues the opposite. If a couple divorces it is always the fault of the spouse. No one was thinking about the marriage as a separate point of interest, only

The Theology

personal interests. God's actions have both His and our interests together in view. It is with Him all about reconciliation [Romans 3:25] and fellowship [1 John 1:3].

God's Relationship with Adam and Us

God's relationship with us is dynamic. His emphasis is on the relationship in all He says and does. But He is the *Creator* and we the *created*. We are not the product of some ingenious engineering, like a computer with artificial intelligence (accent on "artificial"). We are "alive" for God breathed His life into us and created us "in His image" (another topic we must look into).

Paul Helm arguing for the Augustinian-Calvinist view of the foreknowledge of God pointed to the uniqueness of human responsibility in relation to the sovereignty of God. God's sovereignty is nothing less than His grace. What challenges dogmatism is the seemingly chaotic way God's grace does great things in one life but is resisted or is simply non-responsive in another. Jesus went around healing all in one place but not another [Matthew 4:23; 13:58]. God said, "His sovereignty, His choice!" Romans 9:18 shockingly declares, "... He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens."

Our minds like to keep things simple, which is to say, we like the explanation—as to why things happen as they do—to be without exception. But, as they say, "The exceptions establish the rule." Take God's grace, for example. If grace could never be resisted, if God destined some for salvation and others for hell, we could more fully comprehend His sovereignty and His foreknowledge. But, God made us—everybody—for a love relationship with Him, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" [2 Peter 3:9]. And there's the rub. Love requires freedom to love and be loved.

Helm admitted that "we can never fully comprehend that relation." [Beilby & Eddy, 169]. But it is no less real [Philippians 2:12-13]. The Deistic view of God in error does not recognize God's continuing involvement with His creation. Nothing says this in a more absolute way than Paul's answer to

The Theology

his own question in Romans 8:35 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” In reality, “nothing!” Nothing in time and space, in heaven or on earth. But maybe Paul was mistaken because he left out one thing: a snake! (We save this for later.)

But make no mistake about God’s continuing interest in us or why He would be walking in the evening looking for Adam [Genesis 3:8]. The word “walking” suggests a customary activity. We should think of this when we have gone days without talking to Him!

What Did God Know?

What did God know and when did He know it? Did God not know that Adam and Eve would sin? And if He knew, since it was yet to happen, does that mean it was predetermined or predestined to happen, else God’s knowledge would be a lie—and God does not and cannot lie!

Does Adam’s free will *not* decide his own future [Galatians 6:7]? If the foreknowledge of God is an expression of His omniscience [God is all-knowing] then, logically, it can be argued, lest God be found a liar, that Adam was created to fail.

“No!” says Boyd. He reasons, “God chose to create this world and give agents power to resist Him. Only in this way could God create a world that was capable of love, for love must be *chosen*. In making this decision, God temporarily *limited* his own ability to unilaterally get His way.” Boyd adds, “God has not given away more power to creatures than He [God] can handle.” [Beilby & Eddie, 43-43]. Boyd goes on to maintain that God can give some control to Adam to decide without threatening His [God’s] own sovereignty as God.

Romans 8:28 speaks to the believer’s condition and maybe even their weakness in not always choosing wisely. Perhaps, we, as Christians, do make a wrong move now and then that we can’t “take back” in life’s game of chess (to use this analogy). But then God says, “move over and let me make the next moves—and God wins the game for us! At the same time, people with no working relationship with God and no heart to know Him may, indeed, be subject to the whims of their own

The Theology

“fate.” (Or maybe, by allowing our missteps, God can finally get our attention that we might learn an eternally serious lesson in trust—Faith in His leadership.)

The point is that we are arguing for a logical explanation of something that exists in the realm of relationships—a relationship between God and us. Logic was not the prevalent form of thought until the Greeks engineered it mid-first millennium before the Christian era. Until then, life and language was the expression of a patriarchal/matriarchal social order. The language of the Old Testament is one of a relationship between an authority figure and those under him or her. Life in the Old Testament was based on community achievements not on personal achievements—as we have today in western societies.

All this to say that—yes—Boyd is on to something when he talks about “love”! I use the example of a marriage relationship. How far does a man get arguing with a wife from a “logical” viewpoint! He wins the battle but loses the war. He wins his point but jeopardizes his relationship with the woman he dearly loves. Decisions become joint decisions even if he holds the credit cards in his wallet or the career job that is affording their modern home. (Now-a-days, this relationship is flipped but it is the same). If we could think of marriage as a community of “the two shall be one” [Ephesians 5:32] we might see more clearly why God has relinquished absolute power in being a master to become a husband [Hosea 2:16 NKJV]. This does not threaten God’s power or sovereignty (or His omniscience). Conversely it makes Him “bigger” (more magnificent and glorious) in our eyes.

Dr. Boyd uses a “chess game” as an analogy, which we will take up later in this work. He likens a theology that says all things are predestined or predetermined to playing a game against a computer program you, yourself, wrote, and, in which, you know (not predict) every move the computer would make. Winning this game is a foregone conclusion. The second possibility is playing a game against a computer program you wrote to have optional moves, in which, you must “predict” now the computer’s next move in turn. “Optional” is not open ended

The Theology

because you “know” what are the possible moves for the machine. This is “middle knowledge” which we must speak of in detail later. The third choice is not playing the computer but a real “live” person whose expertise compared to yours is not determined—nothing is determined. You have no knowledge of what move they will make *until they make it!* This is Dr. Boyd’s idea of the “openness view” in which Adam and Eve were alive and dependent solely on their own conscience to guide them. Nothing was predetermined. What we called Infralapsarianism, but with a twist, that, God did not even know what Adam would do.

Stop Her!

If God knew what Eve was *about to do* maybe He could have stopped her, given her a serious reprimand, threatened her with hemorrhoids [Exodus 9:11] or Hansen’s disease [Numbers 12:10] and have given her another chance. How about 70 times 7 chances [Matthew 18:22]?

Could God’s foreknowledge, anticipating the *inevitable*, have Adam and Eve’s disobedience settled in His mind without having it actually happen? Or was the actual moment of failure on Adam’s part required before God would justly pass judgment on the couple. Do we have to commit the sin to be guilty of it or is it enough that it is in our nature to commit it? So God does not need to wait until *we* sin to call us sinners. He knows our fallen nature is prone to it. But what of Adam and Eve, who were, no doubt, created *sinless!*

What we are suggesting is that it is not sufficient to punish someone based alone on their character or proclivities or what even God might know they are about to do that is worthy of judgment. It has to actually take place, first—much to the hurt of all who suffer as a consequence of the evil they imposed upon this world.

All this may be philosophical rambling for most thinking people. But we have to admit that blaming Adam doesn’t explain anything! Milton ended his poem, without

The Theology

further explanation in this sad way: [Book x, in our English, if I may],

They looking back, all the Eastern side [they] beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Watched over by that flaming Brand, The Gate,
With dreadful Faces thronged and fiery Arms:
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The World was all before them,
Where to choose their place of rest, [with] Providence their
guide:
They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,
Through EDEN took their solitary way.

A Disclaimer

Throughout this brief discussion, I purposely left my own view of all this unclear because none of us have all the answers, and I didn't want to suggest I did! But I will affix an epilogue to this work that will be "all me." My view will be simple because I have found that if I can't explain something to a 12 year old, I can't explain it to me either.

There is a lot of John Milton here—not because I might put equal value on his words with what Moses gave us, but because, Milton raises some of the same issues that come up in my mind as I read Moses. But let it be said clearly, the Bible, alone, is our authority on these matters.

Providence or Freedom

Meanwhile, Helm struggles to understand how God could be in control of a situation [Divine Providence] and still allow Eve in a conversation with the tempter the freedom to choose to serve either Him or "self." The chief problem is, she is under the powerful influence at the moment of a being that is plotting her destruction while the God who loves her is seemingly keeping His distance.

In Book III Milton wrote his explanation in a Divine Soliloquy:

The Theology

They [Adam & Eve] therefore as to right belonged,
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their maker, or their making, or their Fate;
As if Predestination over-ruled
Their will, disposed by absolute Decree
Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,

How is God not implicit in Adam's demise? What God "permits" He does so *willingly*? Does He not have a "permissive will"? [1 Samuel 15:10-11]. Augustine argued, "Even what is done in opposition to His will does not defeat His will." [Beilby & Eddy, 176]. "Nevertheless", says Helm, "nothing happens that God is unwilling should happen." [Beilby & Eddy, 177]. Then Helm raises the real issue, raw and curt, "If one asks how human nature can come to have an inclination to evil in a world created by a holy good God, then Augustinianism ... does not have a satisfactory answer." [Beilby & Eddy, 177].

The determined purpose of God and His foreknowledge are not responsible for man's sin. God's sovereignty will never excuse the evil others do. Peter taught that "Him [Jesus], being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, *you* have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death [Acts 2:23 NKJV]. We executed God's determined purpose!? Is not Peter writing with 50-20 vision [Genesis 50:20 NKJV] "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."

Can God Be Disappointed?

Disappointment is impossible when there is a predetermined or predestined result. But foreknowledge can be disappointed or if we argue for an open choice—free-will. This was God's "regret" in making man in Genesis 6:6 where Moses explained, "it grieved Him at His heart" [Ephesians 4:30]. This raises a theological discussion about the "passibility" of God. Some believe that only Christ, God incarnate, having a physical

The Theology

form, could “feel” [pain: emotional or physical]. I think this idea must be revisited based on the Old Testament record were a divine emotion is everywhere in evidence. Explaining God’s feelings as anthropomorphic, as if God were “pretending” for our benefit to relate to us on our level, would be disingenuous of God.

How do we interpret Numbers 23:19 that raises this issue? The Septuagint seems to struggle a bit translating the Hebrew “God is not as man to waver [to be indecisive saying things without meaning and relevance] nor as the son of man to be threatened.” But what does the Hebrew say? According to the New English Translation, “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a human being, that he should change his mind.” God is not a man that He would deceive you, nor like human kind rue the day of His promise.

Keil interprets, “God does not alter His purposes like changeable and fickle men, but keeps His word unalterably, and carries it into execution. ... “ With regard to His own counsels, God repents of nothing; but this does not prevent the repentance of God, understood as an anthropopathic expression [human emotion], denoting the pain experienced of the love of God, on account of the destruction of its creatures, Genesis 6:6.” [Keil & Delitzsch, 183].

The Old Testament is replete with countless examples of God allowing for intercessory prayer to change the outlook of which He warned. That’s what the early prophecies were all about. Some say that God repented or changed His mind, but, was this not somewhere in the middle of an ongoing dialogue between God and His people? At what point is it altered in God’s mind? My friend and I as professional house painters had a rather fun repartee when I was up on a ladder painting and he on the ground. He would blurt out, “You missed a spot!” to which I quipped, “I haven’t left yet!” Is it possible God in dialogue gave us through prayer an opportunity to express our concerns? And might this not have some part to play in sharing in His response?

The Theology

The Fall

Is it possible that there was no “Fall” as early church fathers explained it, but only Adam and Eve’s disobedience which had them expelled from Eden—something we would have done as well—had we been there instead of them? Is it possible that God’s foreknowledge regarding what they might or might not do under the influence of the tempter was something we could have equally anticipated. We have earned the mantra: “There go we—save by the grace of God.” Is it possible that even in the place of absolute luxury and unconditional love mankind must learn their humble dependence on God for their future happiness? And until that lesson is learned—as with humans all things are learned—they—we—would continue to break covenant with God. Is it not possible that Adam and Eve needed the Cross *even in Eden*?

This view is supralapsarian. Perhaps, in Ephesians 1:4 Paul was saying that God created us (in His image) capable of experiencing a voluntary dependence on Him and the ability to enjoy a rich and growing relationship with Him knowing that this dependency would require His grace from the start: “According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

Original Sin

Augustine of Hippo (354-420 AD) coined the phrase, *original sin*, which later Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1033/4–1109), interpreted to refer to Adam’s failure to obey God. Central to Anselm’s doctrine of atonement, therefore, is his theology of original sin. Does “original sin” suggest there was a difference between Adam’s sin and mine? Are we saying that had he not sinned, I would not, *I could not*?

“In one swift move,...[Peter] Abelard [a medieval French scholastic philosopher] removed Anselm’s ... traditional understanding of original sin as creating an infinite debt of humanity before God.” [Vidu, 65]. Abelard was theologically wrestling with the idea that Adam was alone to blame for our

The Theology

sinfulness. Abelard did not see original sin as a state of fallen humanity. Abelard maintained that we would be punished for Adam's sin, grant it. But his sin was *imputed* to us. Adam's sin became ours.

The essence of Anselm's concept of original sin was a lack of moral rectitude *inherited* by fallen mankind. Abelard's idea held Adam (and Eve) alone guilty in the Garden—though his sin was *imputed* to all of us. We became *liable*. So, we ask: Was Adam a test case to see whether or not God would allow Satan the continued freedom to roam the earth causing evil? If Adam had obeyed, does that mean Satan would have already been bound and tossed in the fire in celebration of the happy moment Adam and Eve passed the test? Or when Paul taught that "... by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men," did he see you and me and all mankind in that moment? "for that [on this basis]," Paul concluded "all have sinned" [Romans 5:12]. How exactly does Adam's sin become mine? How am I liable but not guilty?

We have been taught then that Adam and Eve as our first parents created into a sinless state were a special case in that they in some way *passed* sinfulness down to all of us who are now born into sin. But is it possible that the real explanation is much simpler: that Adam and Eve created in God's image were like Christ (incarnate), who needed to "learn obedience" [Hebrews 5:8]. That learning experience was necessitated not because of sin but because of how God created us with natures capable of—no! *requiring*—learning.

What it lies in our power to do," Aristotle reasoned, "it lies in our power not to do." The very environment that gives us freedom to love, gives us freedom to *learn* to love, and comes with the risk of temptation. God knew Adam would disobey, but was it part of a Divine plan, the details of which were already worked out in eternity? We believe that a cross was already in God's plans before Adam was created. "He [Jesus] indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you " [1 Peter 1:19-20].

The Theology

Ambivalence?

What we believe about God's foreknowledge and His sovereignty—to be honest—could depend on who “Adam” is *to us*. I tend to be theologically ambivalent depending on whether or not we are talking about my family. If we are talking about my son or granddaughter, I certainly want to, at least, understand, that when they are doing something that displeases God, it was not predetermined! But, on the other hand, I want God to “save” them, no questions asked, no logic needing to be satisfied, no other future possibility!

Many Issues

We have raised many issues in this brief space which now must be addressed in the text. Perhaps you will be less sure of your theology if you read through, and then, perhaps, you will find it. That has been my experience.

Eden

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden” - Genesis 2:8

Why Name the Garden “Eden”? Eden, especially the *Garden* of God in Eden, is translated *Paradise*, after the Greek. The English idea is an ideal or idyllic place but the Greeks spoke of it as an enclosed park with orchards and majestic trees, which parallels the Biblical description of “every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food” [Genesis 2:9]. Xenophon, a Greek military leader, philosopher, and historian [circa 400 BC], defined it as a *pleasure-ground* after the parks in Persia enjoyed by their kings and nobles. [Liddell & Scott, 1308]. Paradise became in Scripture the place of infinite blessing and indescribable beauty. In 2 Corinthians 12:4 Paul narrated the experience of a brother in Christ who “was caught up into *Paradise*, and heard unspeakable [inexpressible] words, which it is not lawful [not allowed] for a man to utter [because, for one, no doubt, we do not have words in our vocabulary to describe what he saw].” Paradise, as God planted in Eden, had to be ineffably beautiful and glorious. Moses simply remarked, “pleasant to the sight” which, I maintain, grossly understates what Adam and Eve saw. C. F. Keil called it, “the most glorious land in all the earthly creation. [Keil, *Ezekiel*, vol ix, 411].

Eden was said also to contain the jewels that were most sought after for their beauty. Our fascination with precious gems is as real as our joy walking a floral path in early Spring with everything alive and in bloom. The Prince of Tyre lived in a place, Ezekiel described as paradisiacal “since all fulness of what was pleasant, and all possible magnificence surrounded [it].” [Lange, vol vii, 261]. “You have been in Eden the garden of God;” Ezekiel wrote of the prince of Tyre, “every precious stone

Eden

was your covering, the ruby, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of your settings and mounts was prepared for you [NLT: "They were given to you"] in the day that you were created. " [Ezekiel 28:13].

Eden Is Not a New Testament Idea

Paradise always denoted pleasure [Lange, *Joel*, 16]. The Greek for *Eden* is *luxury* and *pleasure* [our word hedonism], two words that in our New Testament fell out of favor since Adam's misstep in the Garden. Neither word is used in our New Testament in a good sense to describe Christian behavior. The Word *Eden*, itself, is not found again in our New Testament until the final prophecy resurrects it with the return of Christ. [Revelation 2:7]. Those who put their trust in the Lord will again drink from the waters of Eden, someday [Ps 36:7-8].

God will bring us back there! You can be sure of it! "For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" [Isaiah 51:3].

A Metaphor for All Things Glorious

The Trees of God's Garden in Eden became a metaphor for greatness, strength and beauty. God compared Assyrian greatness to the Cedars of Lebanon saying that even the Trees in Eden were envious. [Ezekiel 31:3, 9] When Assyria fell as a nation, all the trees were said to pine [no pun intended] for him. The prophet reported, "Lebanon mourned and the trees fainted with grief" [Ezekiel 31:15]. Eden became a by-word, for ornamental and extravagant luxury [Ezekiel 31:16, 18]. So when Joel prophesies of the final judgment, the great and terrible day of the Lord, he speaks of a raging conflagration that will turn Eden to ash as it races through the land. All things luxurious, all man's greatness and the successes and achievements they boast will be consumed in its eternal fury [Joel 2:3]. But God plans to restore Eden for those faithful to Him [Ezekiel 36:35].

The Pleasure Principle: Carnality

The Greek word *luxury* which is a translation of the Old Testament word, *Eden*, is never used in a good sense in our New Testament because pleasure is now tied to living “delicately” [Luke 7:25 KJV]. Peter spoke of certain people who attend your feasts only to indulge themselves with food and entertain themselves under the guise of fellowship. This behavior is only an extension of the hedonistic lifestyle they have chosen [2 Peter 2:13]. This is the very definition of “unrighteous” in Peter’s vocabulary.

Life in Eden

Eden, to be sure, was the most extravagant form of luxurious living! Before sin was introduced our first parents knew the perfect life in terms of all needs met, no lack of love, no sickness, no sorrow—pure happiness!

We do not know how many times the tempter pressured Eve before she yielded, You and I came into a world unlike Eden because of the evil unleashed upon the human race when our first parents mistook a snake’s advice for wisdom. You might want to believe that after a set time, the snake would become an extinct species, along with the devil and his cohorts and there would be no more tempter and no more temptations. [This day is coming: Revelation 20:10]. But the freedom to love God openly now and walk with Him in the cool of our day in prayer, while Satan still roams the earth, requires of us a choice, as well, to keep ourselves from the evil. As David warned, engaging in evil, associating with evil, and allowing evil counsel to influence our thinking is in stark contrast to meditating on God’s Word. [Psalm 1]. If you think of it, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is growing in the garden of our world, too. We probably want to believe that we would not have taken fruit from this forbidden tree. Unlike Adam, we want to believe that, we would have kept our distance, but this is disingenuous.

Adam and Eve, maybe for a day, maybe for years, lived in a sinless world with their Creator. So when we raise the specter of “an inclination or proclivity to evil” we are discussing

Eden

a condition *after* Eden not *in* Eden. Paul spoke of a crooked and perverse generation. The New English Translation used the word, “society” in Philippians 2:15. This is the world we live in and it is getting more perverse and farther from Christian values with the passing of time. The tree is thriving!

The Temptation

We know that being tempted is no sin; it’s the yielding to it God dislikes. For the tempter to have a chance getting us to “bite” requires in our humanness that we have wants left unsatisfied. Adam was created with a full range of “godly” emotional responses, of love, passion, “wants and needs” and of course a desire to give and receive pleasure, which Satan could appeal to as James astutely warned, “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.” [James 1:14 ESV]. The word “desire” need not be evil [Luke 22:15].

But in every sense they were human beings, influenced by the same needs with which we are familiar: for food, for love, for affection, etc. For meeting these needs God gave them each other and put them in a place where “want” [Psalm 23:1] would not exist. They carried no hurts or emotional baggage or vendettas. They had nothing by which to self-identify but the love which God gave them for each other from the start, and it was absolute delight. [I taught an English class using Milton’s description of this paradise and one of my female students became extremely agitated with jealousy for what Eve had but she never did. At the time, I inwardly applauded myself for being such a good teacher but I should have been more sensitive.]

When God told them that “every tree” in the Garden was for them to enjoy [and I doubt they would overeat into obesity], He was giving them license to roam through His world, like children in Willie Wonka’s chocolate factory but better — far better!

God created them with an attractiveness and attraction for each other that fed their happiness in ways a man might only aspire to when he proposed marriage to a woman and she said,

“Yes!” Since Eden, couples need a lifetime to figure out the math: “the two shall become one” and many struggle at it. I imagine for Adam and Eve, because in every sense they were “made for each other,” it was an exciting adventure.

Knowledge of Good and Evil

But from whence came this desire to know evil? Eden means *pleasure* which means the satisfying of selfish desires and interests, as John wrote: The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life [1 John 2:16]. John cautioned, “[This] is not of the Father, but is of the world.” In Eve’s case: “not of God but of self.” None-the-less, John’s analysis of sin is so accurate of Eve’s situation that we cannot see his words as merely coincidental [Genesis 3:6]. The lust of the eyes? “It *was* pleasant to the eyes.” The lust of the flesh? “The tree *was* good for food.” The pride of life? “It was to be desired to make *one* wise [Some say: desirable to look upon].”

Either John knew this verse and parsed it out in writing his epistle or by revelation God used John to show us Eve *before* she ate because it outlines the temptation—not the yielding to it! When God made them human, He equipped Adam and Eve—and us—to feel pleasure and passion.

The fruit of this tree was desirable to look; this can be greed. We desire to have—just for the having, because we have to have it. The word *luxury* often depicts an exotic, out of the ordinary, quality to life. Probably everything in Eden was luxurious, extremely pleasing to the eyes, elegant, or enjoyable to see, as well as taste, especially in a way that is self-indulgent and sensuous. I suppose none of us ever saw something, at a garage sale or maybe on a nature walk or just in a store window and we had to have it, not for any practical reason but just because of how it stimulated our interest when we saw it.

The lust of the flesh was, for Eve, probably simple hunger, even if she just ate, because this fruit was (she thought) eatable and if you have to have fruit, you have to have it to eat. A cartoon I saw captured something about young children that in a comical way teaches us something about all of us. Sitting in his

Eden

highchair, the little fellow refused to eat from his plate of spaghetti—try as his mother might to get his cooperation. So, she took the plate from him and gave it to his older sister sitting next to him, at which time, bawling uncontrollably while reaching for his dish, he cried [the caption read] “My SGHETTI!!” We sometimes only want something because it was taken from us or we shouldn’t have it at all!

Our “flesh” wants things, hungers for not just food but affection and closeness and human contact and conversation. We have to feed our desires but, using this metaphor, *pick another Tree!* Find wholesome and godly ways of addressing all the needs that come with being human.

Pride is always self-deception. The temptation comes when we elevate self over God or others. Whether Eve thought the fruit would make her wise or not is not important in the language. Perhaps, she was influenced by Satan’s lie, “It will open your eyes to see and understand all God sees and understands” [Genesis 3:5]. The Septuagint translates that She found the tree “beautiful to contemplate.” Perhaps, she hesitated knowing what God told Adam, but Satan said something that made a home in her head. She couldn’t stop thinking about it and she finds herself picturing the fruit of that Tree while gardening or walking about—a true temptation. The pride comes in when we rationalize a reason we must have it or we deserve it or it is rightfully ours or we think we will be excused, perhaps, because Adam’s instructions weren’t clear (we might convince God of this). The pride is this self-deception. Some believe her rational was—“I shall be wise.”

It is still a subject of interest for later but she, who was made in God’s image” now wanted to be “like” Him! How ironic! While we are nitpicking on details in the narrative, compare Genesis 2:17 and 3:3 where God instructed Adam not to eat fruit from the forbidden tree. Adam, it appears in the narrative, in sharing this with Eve, added, “Don’t even touch it!” I draw our attention here because in a real world scenario this suggests there might have been an ongoing dialog between them—maybe over hours or days—that led to this outburst.

Meeting Need -not Want

The needs of the body get a bad rap because we don't know how to control ourselves. There's nothing wrong with being human. God did make us that way. When God put Adam in his body—as every man knows—he would need “help” dealing with his passions and desires, his wants and needs. So, He made Eve for Adam [Genesis 2:18]. The dynamic here is all but lost because of sin but Eve could complement Adam—God making her just what he needed—as well as being an expert in emotions and caring. Her ability to express her feelings would go a long way in helping Adam identify his. In simple terms: God created each one of them to meet the needs of the other rather than either of them just taking what they want [which is selfish and sinful].

Satan, according to Milton, understood that he had to “get Eve alone” if she was to become vulnerable to his craft—lying! “It is not good that the man should be alone” God told us. ...and the woman either!

I have a confession to make here. When my bride and I were in the early years of our marriage [we will be married 56 years this June], I wanted to be around her constantly. There were times she had to literally push me away so she could cook dinner or get ready for some event (married men know whereof I speak). There was that time she was at the sink [this was our first year together] and I was at the refrigerator [what else is new!] and I leaned forward to kiss her, not realizing we were “grounded” electrically from the refrigerator (it was old!) and the pipes from the sink. Now that was some kiss!!

That attraction has never wained but now, I am up in my study typing this book and she is downstairs doing whatever she does. Hours go by like this. She will climb the stairs or I will descend them a few times during the “work” day to “check in” on each other because the love is very much there but we have learned that it is alright to spend a few hours a few feet from each other without feeling we are living separate lives.

I was just wondering how long the first couple might have been together before they, too, began to do things “apart”—

not because they were drifting emotionally apart. That would have been impossible *in Eden*, but because they were increasingly comfortable with one another, and beside, “absence makes the heart grow fonder,” they say.

Obedience

Obedience is a learned response—even for the Savior [Hebrews 5:8]. But to our understanding there was no other restriction on the couple than this tree. Everything else was what Francis Schaefer called “freedom within limits.” The tree was the only limit. There were no lessons in obedience, no lessons in self-discipline or self-control that we read about. There was nothing to alert their innocence of the danger in the serpent’s rhetoric.

Even the animals were friendly herbivores [Genesis 1:29-30]. Eden was an animal reserve (we might call it) or sanctuary [Genesis 2:19] In Genesis 2:15 we are told that God “put [Adam] in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it [to serve it and watch after it].” The Septuagint Greek says “to work it and protect it.” What are we saying? Was this an instruction from God, a “calling,” another way in which Adam could “learn obedience.” Or, perhaps, Adam needed something to do ; he was still “single.” This narrative precedes verse 21-22 and his nuptials.

Regarding God’s Garden which Adam was to tend, Jared Diamond informs us, “...Southwest Asia [The Fertile Crescent: Eden] has the earliest definite dates for both plant domestication and animal domestication.” [Diamond, 99]. He concluded this not from Scripture but from radiocarbon dating. Diamond added, “[The Fertile Crescent] has by far the largest number of accurate radiocarbon dates for early food production.” [Diamond, 99]. C. F. Keil in his commentary on Genesis explained, “The earth was meant to be tended and cultivated by men, so that without human culture, plants and even the different varieties of corn [wheat] degenerate and grow wild.” [Keil & Delitzsch, Genesis vol I, 84].

In Genesis 2:5 we are told before Adam was created, “There was not a man to *till* the ground.” So, God caused a mist

Eden

to keep the humidity high without rain. The word translated “till” here is the same word in the Hebrew in verse 15 translated variously, “dress” or, what we read in Greek, “to work” the ground. This supports the idea that plants need to be cultivated to be grown for food. God involved Adam but we read of no disciplinary measure.

We can assume Adam was doing something he loved. We can say that if Jesus’ yoke is easy [Matthew 11:30], God’s must be. The difficulty here is wanting to assume a form for God’s discipline that would be less severe than death but would teach obedience to our first parents. The problem would be, probably, that Adam was too engrossed in admiring God’s garden and enjoying himself. More than a bed of flowers, as Milton depicted, this garden could have just as easily included vegetables that he must protect from the nibblers in the animal world.

I have wondered whether or not there were any other restrictions or instructions given our first parents with a less severe punishment attached, but, if you think of it, that would be irrelevant.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was a test that exposed their interest in *not* wanting to serve God. It revealed an interest in an independence from the God who created them for fellowship; it was a disinterest in knowing Him leading finally, on God’s part, to that lonely stroll through the garden the day they had to leave.

God's Image

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” -
Genesis 1:26

What happened in Eden? Did God knowingly set Adam and Eve up to fail, because in His omniscience, He knew they would disobey. Somehow it seems more reasonable in a humane sort-of way to believe Adam and Eve had the chance of beating the serpent at his own game, of keeping their distance from the forbidden tree, until God said, “Enough” as he promised us when we are tempted. “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able” [1 Corinthians 10:13]. And if Adam had kept himself “pure” [1 Timothy 5:22] would Abel still be alive because Cain would not have committed fratricide. The whole matter of sacrifices would be moot because, with God, sacrifices were a consequence of sin. Perhaps after a short time, God would chop off the head of the snake [Genesis 3:15], throw Satan in the flames [Revelation 20:10], and allow the entire human family to enjoy a refreshing taste from the Tree of Life [Revelation 2:7]. None of us would have been born in sin and Jesus would not have had to die!

Or, we offered earlier as a possibility [according to Reverend Boyd], God did *not* know! Adam’s free will was—what some suggest—incompatible with the will of God. Some like to argue that it is not possible to be incompatible with God’s foreknowledge. Our freedom and God’s foreknowledge are always compatible, that is, what God thinks will happen, will happen, and our freedom to do anything cannot make God a liar. So, if God *did know* what Adam was going to do, then by permitting it, did He predestine him and Eve to fail? Paul wrote “He chose us in Him *before* the foundation of *the*

God's Image

world" [Ephesians 1:4]. Maybe *we*, as believers, are predestined but the lost are not? [I apologize for this paragraph to all those who read it before they knew they didn't want to read it.]

This reminds me of my years as a computer programmer when I chose certain functions and algorithms to get the computer to do this or that. I knew it worked but I wasn't about to look under the hood at the microinstructions which the computer actually followed, the ones and zeros, that the computer understood. My code was in English. As theologians, we keep trying to get into God's head and heart to find out exactly why He did what He did and what limitations He might have placed on Himself. We know Jesus, coming incarnate, "emptied Himself" to be a servant to the Father, as the New Living Bible interprets, "He gave up his divine privileges" [Philippians 2:7]. And if we are honest theologians, we admit that we do not fully understand all the details of His master plan—though we know its true. We know salvation is real. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are real. Our love for Him is real and His promises which say He's coming back to get us are all real. But we simply trust *Him* not our reasoning, not our theologies, not our limited knowledge.

The Wall

John Milton, in "*Paradise Lost*," said there was a wall around God's Garden in Eden which Satan scaled to get in. The wall in Milton's mind was made of a high hedge of trees [Book IV].

As he [Satan] supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of EDEN, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, Crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound the champion head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied; and over head up grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,

God's Image

Cedar, and Pine, and Fir, and branching Palm,
A Sylvan Scene, and as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody Theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher then their tops
The verdurous [green] wall of Paradise up sprung:

Return to Eden

In my heart, I want to return to Eden. In my imagination through Scripture, if possible, I want to peek over the wall and see what I can see. Imagine that repentance means a return to Eden, to the Garden and the Tree of Life and all God intended *His* world to be for us instead of the one we created for ourselves in disobedience [Romans 1:20]. The Old Testament word “to repent” actually means “to return” or “come back” to the Lord [Jonah 3:10; Zechariah 1:3-4; Malachi 3:7; Hosea 3:5; 2 Chronicles 7:14]. God urges His people through Amos to “come back” to Him [Amos 4:6-11 NET]. The word speaks to every heart, Jew and Gentile, those who have known the Truth and those who are hearing it for the first time [Romans 3:30].

The Lord spoke through Jeremiah, “If that nation against whom I have spoken [not just Israel] *turns* [the Greek noun means conversion] from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it” [Jeremiah 18:8]. In an effort to understand God’s reasoning [Isaiah 1:18], we often interpret the Old Testament idea of repentance to mean “turning to the Lord” or “turning from evil” In some sense only Israel can *return*. But turning from evil is not just an 180 degree about face but it includes coming to the Lord because there is no “in-between” space. We either serve Him or we serve self [Romans 8:5, 9, 13]. So how can a Gentile return to the Lord not having known Him at all before? Maybe God wants to bring us back to Eden!

It is prophesied of John the Baptist, “many of the children of Israel shall he [re]turn to the Lord their God.” [Luke 1:16]. We need not stretch the meaning to fit the logic, but, if we were to do so, this verse would be prophesying about those who knew the Savior before and left Him, but we know this wasn’t

God's Image

the case. John the Baptist was preparing the way initially for His coming, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" [Luke 1:17]. So the force of the word is to come to the Lord through repentance. But Oh, to be able to go back, all the way back, to Eden to before Adam sinned, to realize the full happiness and joy of those evening strolls with our Lord, to live in the perfect center of His heart's desire for us!

According to Paul's theology, *all* [Jew and Gentile] must *return*. We were "*in Adam*" [1 Corinthians 15:22] in the Garden when death came to us all after the similitude of Adam's transgression [Romans 5:14]. We experience physical death as a consequence of our own sinning even if our sin is not the same as Adam's [Romans 5:12; 6:23]. And we need to turn from sin and come all the way back to God.

Made in His Image

Adam—all mankind in Adam—was not created by God in the same way all other life was formed. Only mankind was created in God's image [Genesis 1:26] while God spoke all other life forms into existence [Genesis 1:20, 24-25]. This distinction is not contradicted by Genesis 2:19 which says that all animal life was *fashioned* out of "earth." [Including Adam and us]. But mankind, alone, was created [Genesis 1:27] in the divine likeness. Adam's *form*, alone, was *formed* from the ground [Genesis 2:7] but he was and we are what Peter might call, "partakers of the divine nature" [2 Peter 1:4]. Dr. Gerald Schroeder in "*The Science of God*" sees a further distinction based on Rabbinic tradition and the use of 2 different Hebrew terms in Genesis 2:7. When Adam was created, God "*breathed ... life into the man's nostrils.*" This is spoken only of Adam [and by extension, Adam's "rib," Eve]. According to Schroeder, man became a living Neshamah [a "God-breathed" being], whereas the word used of all other animals is Nephesh or "soul." Schroeder also points out an interesting distinction in the spelling of one word in Genesis 2:7 compared to verse 19, the word "formed." In reference to the creation of Adam, the word is spelled with one extra letter, which after Rabbinic tradition,

God's Image

Schroeder says, is an abbreviation for the Lord's name meaning "the Eternal One." [Schroeder, *The Science of God*, 139]. This suggests a distinction even in the process of forming or making Adam from all other life forms.

Though I don't subscribe to such a distinction between Neshamah and Nephesh [Neshamah which means "breath" can refer to *every* breathing thing. - Genesis 7:22], there is here no evolutionary case for our coming from bonobos or gorillas. What distinguishes us from the rest of God's creative genius is that He made us "like" Himself in some regard and it is this likeness that concerns us in Eden because something happened to distort it when Adam disobeyed. All Christian theology rests on 4 questions: (1) What did Adam become when God create him "in His [God's] image"? [Genesis 1:26]. (2) What happened to Adam, to that image, when he disobeyed? [Romans 1:23]. (3) And what happened to mankind when Adam disobeyed? [1 Corinthians 15:22] (4) How can we return to that "image," now, *in* Christ and to Eden? [Romans 8:29].

In His Likeness

In Genesis 1:26 "God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'..." Good news! In Hebrew thought often synonyms are used for emphasis, which means that here we do not need to look for a distinction between "image" and "likeness." [Keil & Delitzsh, *Genesis* vol I, 63].

Let's begin with what it is *not*. "Certainly not ... because we are in the upright position [walk on 2 feet], nor does it refer to our bodily form since God has no bodily form, and the man's body was formed from the dust of the ground; nor does this refer to our dominion over nature, for this was unquestionably ascribed to Adam *as the consequence* or influence of his likeness to God." [Keil & Delitzsh, *Genesis* vol I, 63].

C.F. Keil believes that "Man is the image of God by virtue of his spiritual nature, of the breath of God by which ... [he] became a living soul." [Keil, *Genesis* vol I, 63] The image of God consists, therefore, in the spiritual dimension of man, not merely in his self consciousness [having a conscience and a

God's Image

consciousness of moral principles] or self determination [free-will], or in the fact that man was created a consciously free ego [with personality]; “for personality is merely the basis and form of the divine likeness, not its real essence.” Keil admits that “There is more difficulty in deciding in what the likeness to God consisted.” [Keil & Delitzsh, *Genesis* vol I, 64]. Some say that by ascribing language or music to man in this he distinguishes himself from all other creation.

Image of Christ

It would be easier to work backward and understand what is the image of Christ we are being “changed into ... from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” [2 Corinthians 3:18]. Since Christ is in God’s Image [2 Corinthians 4:4] and we are being conformed to His, Christ’s [Romans 8:29], then, by syllogism, we, as new creatures, a new creation, [2 Corinthians 5:17] are being made back into God’s Image!

One thing is clear—all else aside: This is spiritual! There was a relationship Adam was capable of having with God on a conscious level of fellowship between 2 beings blessed with personality and free-choice in which holiness was not a theological term but a divine quality they shared. Before that disastrous incident with the fruit, Adam was getting to know His Creator on a personal level. He probably knew what God liked and didn’t like. It seems improbable to me that talk of the “snake” didn’t come up somewhere in conversation.

When Adam hid himself with Eve in their shame [something we need to discuss later] he must have known that God took these evening strolls through his world. You don’t hide from a God you don’t believe is there! If we argue that he only ducked behind a shrub when he heard God’s voice, we must at least admit, Adam knew it was God’s voice! That is a simple privilege all God’s children enjoy now by virtue of their knowing the Savior [John 10:27]. And this by virtue of being “in His image” or as Peter said we are blessed with, “all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” [2 Peter 1:3].

God's Image

As believers we are only beginning to understand what the Lord is doing *in* us to bring us back to that place Adam enjoyed at the first, when God's voice was a call to communion with Himself. Now, we see this as prayer and there are four words for it: supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks [1 Timothy 2:1].

Created and Formed

Adam was both created in God's likeness or image and formed or fashioned with a human body. We cannot use the word "incarnate" because he was not God in human form but "earth" in human form. But we find him both animal and spiritual, having both a soul and a spirit. It is the spiritual dimension to his nature that gives him Godlikeness. When God formed him or fashioned him a body and breathed life into it, Adam became a living soul. The New Living Translation of Genesis 2:7 reads, "Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person." Adam was both created in God's likeness or image, his spirit, and fashioned in human form brought to life, a living soul. Theologians refer this to a trichotomy: body, soul and spirit [1 Thessalonians 5:23].

The "soul" in the Old Testament stands for the person, him or her self in poetic discourse. "My soul" means simply "me" and your soul is "you." It is the seat also of our passions and emotions and all appetites of the "flesh." The soul craves, hungers, wearies, and may be satisfied: "He [the Lord] satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness" [Psalm 107:9]. The soul and body are inseparable "But his flesh will be in pain ... And his soul will mourn" [Job 14:22 NKJV]. In every way, the "soul" represents the "person."

The "spirit" of a person in the Old Testament is what animates him or her: temper, disposition or one's impulse. Isaiah can refer to "bitterness of [grieved in] spirit" [Isaiah 54:6]. Number 5:14 talks about a "spirit" of jealousy. In Genesis 41:8 Pharaoh's spirit was troubled from a dream he had.

God's Image

Both soul and spirit in the Old Testament describe aspects of our humanity. The soul and spirit are, therefore, barely distinguishable. Zechariah in speaking of “the spirit of a man formed within him” [Zechariah 12:1] used the same word “formed” which was descriptive of the soul in Genesis 2:7.

This should not trouble us. Conversely, it supports the suggestion that Adam’s sin affected his relationship with His Creator. He became God’s enemy—as we all did. “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” [Colossians 1:21]. In some way, perhaps, not clear, but very real, when Adam and Eve sinned, a sacred bond of fellowship with God which they enjoyed in Eden because they were “in His likeness” was severed until the Savior would come and bring reconciliation. We know that we are being restored into that image by being conformed to Christ’s.

In 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 Paul speaks of the things the Spirit of God shares with us, things which are referred to as spiritual or spiritual gifts. Paul confirmed that these truths are not naturally discerned but require we have the “mind of Christ.” He explained elsewhere “If Christ is in you, ... the spirit is alive because of righteousness.” [Romans 8:10].

It seems almost cliché but when someone asks, “How do you know God is real?” You answer, “I talked with Him this morning.” One member of a church I pastored many, many, years ago, experienced a grand mal seizure but when her mother claimed she was depressed and possibly suicidal (things that don’t fit with the seizure) we called the ambulance for a ride to the hospital. When I arrived, as pastor, I spoke with the psychiatrist with my parishioner (his patient) in the room. He began to question her,

“Did you talk to God?” he asked, puffing on his cigar.

“And did God talk to you?” he continued skeptically.

She said nothing; so, he continued, “God told you to be good!” His German accent was more pronounced as he took another puff.

God's Image

Then turning to me he remarked, "We have big words for this, but what it means is, 'She's nuts!'"

How little those who do not know the Lord personally know about the Lord, at all. Paul defined our Christianity not in religious terms but in terms of the Spirit's leading in our lives: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." [Romans 8:14]. And it is the Spirit of God the teaches us [John 16:8-10], introduces us to the blessings of Heaven [2 Corinthians 1:22], and intercedes in prayer for us when no one else can or will [Romans 8:26]. None of this would happen if we were not made in His image—the image of Christ.

It is by our spirit we fellowship with God and are able to "get back" if only in part [1 Corinthians 13:9] what Adam gave up in Eden. My mind returns to Eden and our Creator while reading the New International Version of 2 Corinthians 5:5, "Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

The Tree of Good & Evil

“...the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” - Genesis 2:9

There is every reason to assume that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was a particular tree God designated “The Forbidden Tree.” There is no species of fruit tree one might call “forbidden” because its fruit makes us wise when eaten. Like the Tree of Life [Eternal Life], this was a special tree, designated by God for a reason now well known. Adam was *not* created for failure; Adam was created with the *freedom* to fail. There is a marked difference between the two ideas even in the foreknowledge of God.

We want to believe that Adam had every chance at avoiding Satan’s advances, but like you and I [I can add you here, right?] temptation is real. Because Adam was created perfect and while he held that fruit in his hand and it had not reached his lips yet, we want to believe that before that first bite he was far more capable than we at resisting the devil, according to the Biblical maxim, “...submit to God. ...resist the devil and he will flee from you” [James 4:7]. But freedom to choose is no less a choice even if we are, as we are, “able to ... bear it.” [2 Corinthians 10:13].

It seems, therefore, unrealistic to treat this tree as allegorical while Eve’s temptation to eat from it was real. It should be obvious to all that mixing allegory and reality is absurd. Even though, neither of these 2 trees can be taxonomically identified, we have to believe they were real trees. Most believers—if not all—in some sense or another see this tree as real because Adam and Eve were real. Paul mentions Adam 6 times and Adam is part of the genealogy of Christ according to Luke [Luke 3:38]. If the story were allegorical to explain the

The Tree of Good & Evil

origin of sin, the Savior's crucifixion for that sin might be seen as an allegory and not historically true even though it was painfully real!

The Big Moral Bang

Adam's first taste of the deadly fruit was like the Big Bang, the first nano blip in Planck time when all energy came into existence out of nothing and out of that energy, the universe [Genesis 1:1]. This book is not about the "Big Bang" but the "Big Moral Bang" when in the twinkling of Eve's eye she saw her man bite down and evil was now in the world!

My dear wife sees no reason to revisit Eden since it is not a part of our world now. But the evil that was unleashed is. The story should be told since it is the genesis of all sin, as that "Big Bang" was the beginning of all matter in the universe! Solomon wrote, "That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun" [Ecclesiastes 1:9].

Back to Eden

The big metaphysical question asked is "Why am I here?" What is the reason for man's existence? If we are the result of an evolutionary randomness out of an organic accident of nature, then, there is no reason. That's that! But if we have a Creator, we should ask, what that Creator might have had in mind making us and if He has changed His mind on that score. It has been said that God made us for His love; He didn't come to love us as an afterthought of our creation. The Amplified Bible in Ephesians 3:18-19 reads, "Be fully capable of comprehending with all the saints (God's people) the width and length and height and depth of His love [fully experiencing that amazing, endless love]; and [that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] the love of Christ which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience], that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all the fullness of God [so that you may have the richest experience of God's presence in

The Tree of Good & Evil

your lives, completely filled and flooded with God Himself].” That’s what God had in mind for Adam and Eve!

If God has not changed His mind and if Eden is our beginning, I suggest, that Adam’s misstep not only introduced evil into our world but he left us with an undeniable longing to get back to Eden—like salmon swimming against the current to find their spawning grounds. There is deep in the human psyche an irrefutable passion, an unmistakable quest, for happiness which the human imagination equates with either pleasure or getting “back to nature.” But while happiness always pleases, all forms of pleasure do not bring happiness. Nor can a stoic denial of pleasure satisfy the soul [Acts 17:18].

There is an Adam in all of us because we are all an extension of the life first breathed into the first man when God created him. And now we dream of the pleasure, of the paradise, he knew but we are denied. The desire for pleasure, we cannot deny it, is a creation of God which He made a part of us. To be sure, until we reach the Kingdom of Heaven, we cannot know the Paradise Adam and Eve enjoyed.

But man’s problem is that he will always seek to find it—and if not, he will substitute for it—without God, as Paul in such crass language cautioned us about “changing the truth of God into a lie [Romans 1:22-28].

Good and Evil

If God planted that tree—and there is no reason to assume another gardener [Genesis 2:8]—is He, in some way, responsible for the evil in its branches? No! It wasn’t the tree that contained the poison that sin became to the human heart. That poison was in the *act* of Adam’s disobedience. God did not create either an evil tree nor an evil Adam. Adam was free to decide, as he must be, if God is to have someone He can love freely.

We probably have some idea what “Good and Evil” are all about but how much did Adam know? Was God’s instruction clear to him? Was God in effect pointing and saying “that tree over there; the one in the middle; stay away from it”? Was “evil” just an abstract word? The only practical example would come

The Tree of Good & Evil

when a snake starts talking. We can assume Adam didn't clearly know what evil was because life's lessons are *learned by experience*. They would *not* have experience evil yet—sadly not until they disobeyed! “Evil” as an intellectual or academic study is like seeing a dangerous animal in the zoo rather than being in the wild with it. Eve's experience in childbearing, for example, since the fruit incident, would be associated with pain, a pain for which a different word [“labor”] was invented to describe it. How would even God explain this to discourage her from listening to a snake! Is this like telling a toddler not to touch a hot stove when they don't know what “hot” means or what a “burn” is—not until they do! So many of life's lessons are learned when we disobey, but for Adam, there would be no second chance after it was learned other than through the Savior's death.

I am not sold on the idea that even today's Christian Church knows what evil is; but it wasn't knowledge God promised but *death* if Adam and Eve ate of the tree. There is clearly a pervasive and systemic evil in the world which Paul in Philippians 2:15 called “crooked and perverse” and 15 different English translations of this verse didn't think they could improve on that description. Only one English translation, the NIV, used the word “warped.” The translators were a bit less sure of whom Paul was talking about: a people, a nation, a society, or a generation. Most of them chose “generation” to describe a word which Joseph Thayer called “the whole multitude of men living at the same time.” [Thayer, 112]. It is hard not to call this a systemic or pervasive evil when Jesus, in talking about the events of the end times used the word *verily*, “Verily I say unto you, that *this generation* shall not pass, till all these things be done.” [Mark 13:30].

Crooked

Crooked is opposed to *upright*, *sincere*, or *true*. *Perverse* means *corrupt* or *wicked*. These are all Biblical terms for disobedience but not just the act but the heart and thought of the person that commits it. The New Living Translation of Hebrews

The Tree of Good & Evil

4:12 reads "For the Word of God is alive and powerful. ... It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires." Adam's heart was exposed more than his body when he attempted to hide himself from God.

This is probably where the idea of "The Fall" of Adam came from because God was not dealing anymore with a simple act of disobedience. That, in and of itself, is forgivable. But what Adam and Eve did revealed a change in character or nature. Persons who *act* corrupt *are* corrupt.

There is a curious spelling in some Old Testament words that by intensifying the meaning of the word we may go from the act to the quality of the person committing it. So the same word "to lie," for example, can call someone "a liar" by strengthening the meaning. In Psalm 116:11, the Psalmist concludes, "all men are liars," using the simpler spelling admitting that he trusted no one. [Romans 3:4]. But intensified it speaks of a condition of the heart as when God reprimanded Israel for lying [being untrue to Him] and not trusting in Him, "...you have not been true to me [you lied to me!] and have neither remembered me nor *taken this to heart*" [Isaiah 57:11]. Their lying was more than verbal or mere words but became an active deception against God. Walter Brueggemann called it *disloyalty [a] compromise[d] loyalty to Yahwah.*" [Brueggemann, 40-66, 179]. He calls the language intense and extreme. Paul Hanson characterized Israel as drifting away from the God of compassion, hating justice, and indiscriminately attaching themselves to ... cults that promised immediate satisfaction and freedom from moral obligations." [Brueggemann, 40-66, 178]. All this is encapsulated in "the lie,"

There is also a difference between *telling a lie* and telling *lies* [plural]. Solomon, speaking in the stronger spelling, observed "A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies (it is who they are) [Proverbs 14:5].

We take care not to stretch the language of Scripture to mean whatever we want it to mean. But according to Gesenius this intensified spelling often means "to busy oneself eagerly with the action indicated..." So, *to laugh* means *to jest* or *make*

The Tree of Good & Evil

sport and *to ask* means *to beg* [E. Kautzsch, #52.f, 141]. And to lie becomes part of a deception. [I don't think God believes in "little white lies."]

What is a spouse to say when their marriage partner is caught in an adulterous act? A single act, a single indiscretion, a single night of misguided passion? How difficult it becomes to view it as the "single" event it was. It suggests deeper issues within the marriage. It suggests hearts drifting apart and forgiveness now is not as easy as when mommy forgives a young child for telling a lie on their sibling. It is more intense because it penetrates the seat of human trust and love's endurance. Was not this more descriptive of what Adam and Eve did when they disobeyed God?

About God

There is a sense in which Numbers 14:19-22 reveals more about God than just His relation with Israel after the Exodus. With His permission, let me change Israel to Adam. The heart of God is still in evidence in the text. Moses is praying "Please forgive the iniquity of [Adam] according to your great loyal love" Then the Lord said, "I have forgiven him as you asked. But truly, *as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord.* For he has seen my glory and all I did in [Eden] ... and yet has tested me now..., and has not obeyed me [listened to my voice]."

God's words, "as I live" is a phrase God uses to swear an oath by Himself which here underlines God's promise that He will be glorified: "the earth will be filled with His glory." C. F. Keil interprets this, "He [God] will carry out his work of salvation to a glorious victory." [Keil & Delitzsh, *Numbers*, 44]. God has not forsaken His vision: not for Israel or Adam.

Regarding forgiveness, the point is moot. Of course, He forgave them "The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and [but] by no means clearing the guilty" [Numbers 14:18]. According to Paul in Romans 3:25 God tolerated evil until Christ would come to deal decisively with it. With God, it was never a question of forgiveness, but longsuffering. It was never a question of

The Tree of Good & Evil

forgiveness but of God's plan to restore what evil has taken [Joel 2:25]. We need to be made into the image of Christ. God, I believe, will revisit Eden.

The Greek word for "Eden" is *luxury*. Living in Eden was luxurious where Adam and Eve had want of nothing, no sickness, a perfect marriage, and pleasure in such abundance they called it "Paradise." I know I might be going deep into my imagination for this, but Eden was more luxurious than we could picture it.

Luxuriously Glorious

David wanted Solomon to build the Temple "for the LORD ... exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious " [1 Chronicles 22:5]. Paul taught that God's work in us is "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" [Ephesians 3:20]. We know that His resource of Grace is infinite taking "the ages to come [to] show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ" [Ephesians 2:7]

Everything God does is beyond measure and extraordinary so how dare we think of Eden as any thing less when God is the gardener. How are we to understand Genesis 2:9 "Out of the ground the LORD God made *every* tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." Consider the stately Cypress or fir tree, which according to Ezekiel is a symbol of luxuriance and stateliness: "I made it beautiful with a multitude of branches, So that all the trees of Eden envied it, *That were in the garden of God.*" [Ezekiel 31:9].

The Cedars of Lebanon were a symbol of such greatness. Of all the trees in Eden the Cedar towers over them. God boasted, "his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their

The Tree of Good & Evil

young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty" [Ezekiel 31:3ff.].

What should we take away from all this? I like to take what God provided in Eden and call it *luxurious* and then ratchet up that luxuriance to describe heaven and call it *glorious*.

Evil

Words in our Old Testament used for evil or sin are more about the results it causes than a description of what it is. Robert Girdlestone calls it a pictorial language "seldom exhibited more clearly than in connection with the various aspects of evil. Every word is a piece of philosophy; ... a revelation. The observer of human affairs is painfully struck by the wearisomeness of life, and by the amount of toil and travail which the children of men have to undergo to obtain a bare existence; he sees the hollowness, vanity, and unreality of much that seems bright and charming at first; ... setting forth sin in its relation to God, to society, and to a man's own self" [Girdlestone, 76].

There is a word that should suffice to describe "the root of everything *wicked*" found in 1 Timothy 6:10. What word is used to translate this word into English does not appear important because the force of the word is simply the opposite of all "good." But what is "good"?

James stated, "Whatever is *good* ..comes from God our Father," [James 1:17]. By this do we mean that there is no other source from which we might receive what is good for us? Is James simply affirming that whatever God gives is always good but there might be other sources, as well?

"We know that *all* things work together for *good* to them that love God" [Romans 8:28]. It is, however, difficult for me to imagine another means for obtaining perfect goodness. Thayer says that "good" means "upright, free from guile, particularly

The Tree of Good & Evil

from a desire to corrupt...[and this word 'good' is spoken] preeminently [in Scripture] of God as consummately and essentially good." [Thayer, 2]. Perhaps, we should ask, "From whom else could we receive grace? From whom else other than God, Who gifts us His love as an act of pure selfless concern, unworthy as we are, undeserved as His gift is?" Doesn't this give meaning to the word "good"?

Jesus taught, "... there is none good but one, that is, God." [Mathew 19:17]. Paul reminded us "there is none that does good, no, not one." [Romans 3:12]. So if God is good and good is the opposite of evil, what is evil?

The word "evil" used in Genesis 2:9 as descriptive of Adam's disobedience speaks to anything that brings ruin. According to Girdlestone, "It binds together... the deed and its consequence." [Girdlestone, 80]. Richard Trench called it an "active evil" or the wicked deed, evil in action ...wicked [evil] songs [as an example] ... corrupt the minds of the young" [Trench, *Synonyms*, #LXXXIV, 315-17]. Jesus spoke of a mischief-working [evil] eye [Mark 7:22]. Evil beasts are ravenous beasts... in the Septuagint (Genesis. 37:3; Isaiah. 35:9). Satan is evil ... as the author of all the *mischief* in the world [Matthew 6:13; Ephesians 6:16; cf. Luke 7:21; Acts 19:12].

This side of Eden, we might be inclined to call evil anything our conscience has been trained to reject or things of which the church disapproves. We might treat this word as our private security against all that opposes us in word and action. But not in Eden!

In Eden "the good" was given the sacred task of keeping God's honor pure, coming against any word or thought that disgraces His name or His creative purpose [Romans 11:22; Galatians 5:22]. Evil was the serpent itself—as in the New Testament, the devil is called "the evil one" [Matthew 6:13 NKJV & many other translations].

Perhaps, it is time to suggest that God's commandment about the tree was due to His insight into how Satan operates [2 Corinthians 2:11], how Satan would want to tempt Adam and Eve away from Him [God] and God embodied this spiritual struggle in a symbol, in a tree, because Adam and Eve, as you

The Tree of Good & Evil

and I, could obey a concrete or specific instruction better than an abstract or general one. I am suggesting that there was nothing “evil” about the tree. If God said, avoid the snake, Satan might have come in another form [2 Corinthians 11:14]. But God being the genius He was, and is and will always be, He put the focus on an object which confined Satan’s attention to a single event and location making it impossible for Satan to use his craft in any other way than at this harmless fruit tree.

And at the same time the test was set: Would Satan lure our first parents away from God? Would they seek to become their own God, live independent from the God Who loved them and was planning so many wonderful things for them! Would they trust God about something called “evil” that He warned them about but before experience would sadly verify. In a single moment, their hearts became estranged from the God they knew loved them, like a spouse in the arms of a stranger.

But it is not all over between them! As Hosea learned, God wants us back! [Hosea 13:9].

The Snake

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made” - Genesis 3:1

Have you ever asked why Satan possessed a snake to tempt Eve? No? I understand. In this book I have been asking a lot of questions never brought up in casual conversation, theological discussion, or sermon. The snake, the Bible called, “crafty” The King James says, *subtile*; but “crafty” is the better word. In Proverbs 12:23 Solomon tells us that the person who is crafty, unlike the simple minded, will “cover up” his real intentions. The New English Translation reads, “The shrewd person conceals knowledge, but foolish people publicize folly.” Satan is a master at deception. Jesus called him the “father of lies” [John 8:44]. But is all this necessarily a characteristic of an animal that slithers silently through the forest, unseen, until it strikes its prey with a lethal bite? Most English translations correctly use the word “poisonous” but in Jeremiah 8:17, the word is not “poisonous” but “hissing.” Deadly vipers warn when they are about to strike.

Jesus instructed us to be “wise as serpents, but harmless” drawing attention to this natural characteristic of snakes to be, in a good sense, prudent. The serpent is here described as a creature of God; it must therefore have been good, like everything else that God had made [and will be again: Isaiah 11:8]. But Satan knowing only the adulterated use of prudence, used his cunning for evil. He is a villainous trickster employing sophistry [the use of fallacious arguments, especially with the intention of deceiving]. He had reason, therefore, to select the serpent to possess.

The Snake

The language of Genesis 3:1 of the serpent talking warrants a closer look. The New English Translation reads, "Is it really true that God said, 'You must not eat from any tree of the orchard?'" Satan misquotes God to feign surprise that God might say such a thing, as if to add, "Tell me God didn't say that!" Tempters don't argue or confront; they persuade. This is one reason the word "flattery" becomes an instrument of deception, "...by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive" [Romans 16:18]. The New Testament word speaks of "gentle" and favorable" words but with bad intentions. Satan agrees with us in an effort to rope us in [James 1:14].

"Of course not, silly! Only one tree is off limits." She said smiling, "We shouldn't even go near it" [Genesis 3:2-3 my interpretation"]. I should hope that if a snake starts questioning my understanding of God's Word, alerts, go off in my head! But this is Eden! And there was no danger living among the animals of the forest. Eve was more innocent than we could hope to be because we have been born into an evil world that early begins to shape our personality, select our priorities, train our conscience, and, at least, give us a sense of "street-smarts." And every act of abuse as well as every kindness has some part in molding us into who we will become as adults. Eve came fully grown, without parents, without abuse, and without emotional baggage. There might be a sense in which she was more vulnerable to Satan's lies while he painted her future with a broad brush stroke, making it sound too good to ignore. After all, he is a pro at tempting!

Scholars see Satan's words as a "double entendre" [open to 2 interpretations] of half truth. By eating the fruit man did become knowledgeable of evil, but they forfeited the good in the process. "Knowledge obtained by evil is as far removed from the likeness of God as the imaginary liberty of a sinner from the bondage that sin brings." [Keil & Delitzsch, *Genesis*, 95].

When does the tempter try once and then give up on drawing us into sin? We do not know how many times Satan returned to draw Eve's attention to the Tree of knowledge. Perhaps, once some of the other trees began to lose their mystique she became more vulnerable. Perhaps, at first she

The Snake

confided in Adam for strength to resist but this time he was elsewhere. Temptation proves most tempting when it is relentless. None of us survive without God's grace!

Is the Serpent Allegorical?

As with Adam and Eve, the serpent must be real, else, Paul's reference to the serpent would lack a legitimate claim to truth. If the serpent was only fantasy everything would depend on our interpretation and be subject to the whims of the storyteller. We could invent mottoes or none at all.

Paul reminded us of Eve's moment of weakness, warning, "...I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his craftiness, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." [2 Corinthians 11:3]. Temptation is real! So was the serpent. If the serpent were not real, could we claim that Eve's temptation was? If the serpent were merely an allegorical explanation for Eve's disobedience, how are we to explain her and Adam's "fall" from grace? And how might this story explain our need of a Savior. Historical narrative, on the other hand, is a powerful teacher—as they say, learn it or repeat it.

There is a curious passage of scripture narrating the story of God's people in the Wilderness being bit by snakes. In Numbers 21:7-9 we read, "Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." This passage is clearly a reference to the Cross in John 3:14-15: "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life"

The Snake

Genesis 3:15

Aside from those references to serpents throughout the Biblical Account that reveal the presence and significance of snakes in ancient cultures, there appears to be a spiritual significance as well. The snake represents the spiritual battle Christ waged with Satan, a point well made in that well-known text in Genesis 3:15 [NKJV] where God says to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall *bruise* your head, And you shall *bruise* His heel."

The Old Testament verse uses the same word for both a bruised head and a bruised heal. Scholars question the meanings since one is fatal and other is not. Another translation, more acceptable to me, is "to strike or smite" which best captured the meaning. The Latin translates "Her Seed will crush his [Satan's] head while he "lies in wait" at [our Lord's] heel. [Interestingly enough, in the language of the Old Testament, the words "crush" and "wait" are only a single letter apart, perhaps, reflected in the Latin Dr. Lange explains, "The Vulgate [Latin] chooses ... interpretations ... that lie ...far apart. This is evidently done in order that .. The virgin ... may exhibit the highest possible degree of heroism whilst ... under the protecting veneration of the monastic theology, she does not suffer the least injury to her heel." [Lange, *Genesis*, vol I, 234ff].

In Romans 16:20 Paul encourages, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Here "bruise" really means to completely crush him! If this answers the Old Testament word for "bruise," the "blow" Satan received by Christ on Calvary was, to the devil, a fatal blow! The Old Testament word is also used in Isaiah 3:15 translated "grind:" they "grind the faces of the poor into the earth." It is reasonable to imagine the word meaning "to "trample under foot" or perhaps, to pulverize by rubbing" like with a pestle and mortar. The Seed of the woman is, of course, the Savior, who was "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities." His heal was traumatized but not fatally, since He is alive today. {The metaphor was never meant to describe the Resurrection, per se}

The Snake

In the same battle, Satan's head was mortally wounded. This is not the place for a lesson in Soteriology, the study of Salvation, but in listing the 3 major accomplishments on the Cross, one tells how Christ "spoiled principalities and powers, [and] made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" [Colossians 2:15].

Serpent or Satan?

Genesis 3:14 references the snake but verse 15, is about Satan. There is a fundamental exegetical law to remember: An historical foreground [Satan] may have a symbolic background [the serpent]. [Lange, *Genesis*, vol I, 233].

In a YouTube video put out by National Geographic we are told science has discovered the "Sonic hedgehog" gene [named after the cartoon character] in Pythons, which is genetically turned off now. Initially snakes did have legs when this gene was turned on. This gene controls the development of "spines that grow from embryos when limb development begins."

"It's one of the strangest body plans in vertebrates," University of Florida biologist Martin J. Cohn said when describing the findings. [<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/snakes-grow-legs-evolution>].

The snake that was in the Eden story was not a Python. It was some form of Viper, but is it now too incredible to believe God did this? The snake is of the suborder Serpentes with over 3,000 different species. It is possible by mutation for the gene to come on and hatch a snake with legs, but this is not germane to our discussion here.

Some correctly pointed out that the "curse" God pronounced had more to do with Satan than the serpent. So, when God cursed the snake above all cattle, this does not mean more cursed than cattle or even that cattle would now abhor snakes. It is reasonable to believe the curse was on Satan who is here found guilty of a crime punishable by spiritual death [Revelation 20:10]. The snake's part as Satan's instrument is to now crawl or slither about as a reminder of the event—a

The Snake

reminder we should take to heart because it marks the defeat and demise of the chief enemy of our souls. Every snake or worm should speak to us [regarding our salvation] about Christ's victory against him from the Cross.

Naked

“Who told thee that thou wast naked?” - Genesis 3:11

“Who told you you were naked?” God asked Adam. Then God added, “unless you ate from the tree commanded by me [the Hebrew says “us”] not to eat?” [My translation]. The Septuagint version reads, “who told you that you were naked, unless you had eaten of the tree concerning which I charged you of it alone not to eat?” Notwithstanding the sensitivity such a matter deserves, these are God’s words, from which much insight can be derived.

Who did tell them that they were not wearing clothes! At what point does such an idea enter our thoughts while 2 year olds disrobed roam the house happy in their innocence? Even aborigines and pagan cultures respect a certain degree of bodily privacy. Such privacy is inseparably linked to their sense of morality and consequently shame if uncovered. The real issue is conscience not clothes!

I tell the account of a chieftain in an Amazonian tribe who received an unexpected visit from an anthropologist (this was told to a class I attended in anthropology at a state university). The anthropologist had a gift of a tee-shirt for the chief’s wife. On entering the outer room of their tent the anthropologist surprised the chief’s wife who was standing there with the top part of her body exposed. Ashamed she darted out of sight into the inner chamber of their hut while the social scientist apologizing offered the chief the Tee-shirt for his wife. The chief took it to her and a few minutes later she returned having cut two holes in the front of the shirt to free her bosom from its restraint. It happens she was now wearing her nose ring,

Naked

the real reason for her embarrassment when she was seen in public without it.

As with all values which can make us proud or ashamed, wearing clothing is a learned experience and God wanted to know who Adam's teacher was. One point was clear to God; their reaction to no garments was a consequence of their disobedience. This makes sense since up until now, God's presence was not alarming; nor would Adam or Eve care if He, God, saw them undraped. But it wasn't their physique they were shielding from God's eyes but their actions.

One of our sons years back when they were young met us at the door when we arrived back from the grocery store and I could tell in his face (though this might be a parental thing) that he did something he shouldn't have. I was right. It came out in honest conversation (something we rewarded the boys for above all). Shame is hard to hide; but it has less to do with clothes and more to do with conscience.

There are persons, I surmise from what I hear, that guard their thoughts more than their bodies from view. Privacy is a psychological thing not a physiological one. They will let another person into their arms long before another might enter their hearts. Some forms of shame isolate people from relationships more than from swim locker rooms. People tend to cover their thoughts and intentions more readily as if guarding their very identity or soul from peering minds or accusing tongues that will misuse the privilege of knowing who they really are. The "baggage" we bring into adult life can press us into hiding our true selves from a world of unwanted criticism—even the healthy kind! God's conviction can be confused with a guilt trip to nowhere. All this and like Adam our excuse is we didn't have anything to wear!

Before they opened their minds to *evil*—whatever this meant, but they are learning—the Bible says, "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" [Genesis 2:25]. They were without sin and, therefore, without excuse. But now even their words wear clothes. They were projecting blame and finding excuses which are meaningless rhetoric that God does not even respond to. Gentlemen, when you blame your

Naked

wife for your own failings, you are on your way out of Eden! [Genesis 3:12].

A Little Thing Like “Nudity”

A friend’s dad years ago used to walk about the house undressed because he saw this as “natural” in God’s creation of Adam and Eve. Some argue for a certain natural “freedom” when disrobed but were clothes introduced because of sin? The issue with Adam and Eve was their shame not with each other but with God and only *after* their disobedience! Up until then they didn’t mind being in God’s presence unclothed [Genesis 2:25]. Now suddenly, it mattered.

We often refer to Eden as a time of innocence which should have been characterized by lengthy walks in the cool of the day with God—Adam and Eve wearing only grateful smiles that God was their Creator. There is evidently a connection then in the language between innocence which is guiltless and the cover up which attempts to hid the crime. Innocent people, who do not live with guilt or shame, are more open to sharing their personal thoughts. Deception and lying are traits of the guilty. We must ask whether the nakedness spoken here is their guilt being exposed—for their disobedience to God when they ate the forbidden fruit—and not their bodies!

I am not a counselor but it seems we need a breakthrough here to self-awareness. Both Adam and Eve (you know the account already) project blame for their own disobedience after God has asked them a simple question [Genesis 3:9] “Who told you that you were naked?”

Who could have told them? The serpent? No! Their nakedness before God was a measure of their shame for their disobedience. The last thing the snake might want is for Adam and Eve to allay their shame—to see no crime here in disobeying God.

Who else was there? No one. Just Adam and Eve and, now, God! I strongly doubt one could accuse an angel of teaching them this word. God did not ask them this question to

Naked

find out—as if to say, He didn't know already. He knew! He wanted them to own their sin.

They were naked before God—which suggests this word speaks of more than physical clothing! [Revelation 3:17]. There is a curious spelling for a Hebrew word which refers to unfaithful or deceitful dealings that comes from the word “garment” or a covering because people are said to cover up their crimes using deception or treachery [a betrayal of trust]. It is not a big leap to be talking about shame now instead of the human body. “Let those be *ashamed* who deal *treacherously*....” [Psalm 25:3].

What Adam and Eve were “covering up” was not their bodies but their guiltiness, the only way they knew how with God ...hide! They were hiding from God's judgment [Jeremiah 49:10] . They were concealing their sin knowing that God cautioned them about their pending demise if they disobeyed.

Perhaps, it is not coincidental that Genesis 3:6-7 can be read as a whole: They ate and then they snapped off a few fig leaves and made aprons to cover the lower part of their bodies. There is a psychological element to all this, *shame*. The fig leaves were only symbolic of a spiritual nudity of which they were conscious: “be sure your sin will find you” [Numbers 32:23]. “The Word of God ...is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart [Hebrews 4:12].

F. Deliitzsch wrote in his commentary “This ... easily admits of a psychological explanation, viz. that at the time he actually thought more of his nakedness and shame than of his transgression of the divine command, and his consciousness of the effects of his sin was keener than his sense of the sin itself” [Keil & Delitzsch, 98]. The sad truth is that Delitzsch is right! We may not even know that our excuse is just that, an excuse. We need a breakthrough to real repentance but often take a round about way there—if at all. In fact there is a Greek New Testament word for shame which means “shamed by public awareness.” They were ashamed they got caught!

One word for shame is a sense of honor that hinders us from doing an unworthy act. Shame in this way is an ‘innate moral repugnance to doing something unworthy.’ This shame is probably the repulsion that keeps some from enjoying porn sites

Naked

or engaging in loose and vulgar talk, or telling a dirty joke. Richard Trench calls this being, “self-motivated and implies reverence for the good as good.” [Trench, Synonyms, 68].]

Another word is translated *modesty*. Paul admonished, “I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency...” [1 Timothy 2:9 NET]. Decency is shamefacedness. All a woman need do is check herself in the mirror before walking out to meet her public and let her innate sense of modesty instruct her.

Shame is also, and primarily, the resulting feeling of being defamed by some action a person tried to keep secret but which risks exposure to public scrutiny. It is the feeling that follows the very thought of being found out.

Perhaps, the conscience is numbed by despondency or anger or simply the passion to have something—or someone—they shouldn’t. They rationalize reasons to indulge. They go to that website or promote that defamatory lie. They commit to that dinner with forbidden passions excited or to that meeting incognito with a throbbing desire to do what they know they shouldn’t. There are those forbidden embraces that swoon away any consciousness of wrong and magnetic kisses from which they cannot seem to pull free.

This described Adam’s blight. It was the outward disgrace he feared—afraid of being found out. Paul is passionate about renouncing “secret and shameful ways; ... On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience [and please, catch this last phrase because it takes us back to Eden] *in the sight of God.*” [2 Corinthians 4:2 NET.]

Why Aprons?

Genesis 3:21 the LORD God made coats of skins, and clothed them. Fig leaves were not God’s choice of apparel for them or was His mind on the “sacrifice” made to produce the coverings for them. Not only were their forms now covered but their shame was, too. It is increasingly difficult to read too far into the narrative of Scripture without seeing the Savior in its pages. A point clearly needing to be emphasize is that God, the

Naked

father of our Savior, is actively involved in a caring way to help Adam and Eve through this crisis of conscience. Though Hebrews 11, the roll call of faith, begins with their son, Abel—as if Adam and Eve were forgotten or just a lesson in sin and death, God’s concern for them in this moment bespeaks His love for them, personally, and for His creation through them absolutely.

But the question still remains: Why mention all this here? Wouldn’t the narrative flow better with continuity in Genesis 3:9-11 if we read: “ And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where are you? And he [Adam] said, I heard You voice in the garden, and I was afraid, ~~because I was naked,~~ and I hid myself. And He [God] said, ~~Who told thee that thou wast naked?~~ Have you eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded you that you should not eat?

If Adam was *afraid*, no doubt, of God, the only way fig leaves would help would be to cover his entire body out of sight, but Adam and Eve made “aprons” [Genesis 3:7]. What does fear have to do with clothes? Is this not more about shame than fear [1 Samuel 20:30; Micah 1:11; Revelation 3:18; 16:15].

Adam could have just as readily expressed both fear and shame, a combination spoken of in scripture indicating dire consequences as when Assyria took Egypt and Ethiopia captive [Isaiah 20:5]. If this was Adam’s blight, he did not only hide from God because of his body, he feared to face His Creator! All this as the first consequence of his act of disobedience.

We know that Heaven will be a place without shame [Isaiah 45:17; Romans 5:5] and without fear [1 John 4:18]. Job testified, “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me” [Job 29:14; Isaiah 61:10]. There can be no shame or fear in heaven as there was none in Eden.[Genesis 2:25]. “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,” the prophet declared, “my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness...” [Isaiah 61:10]. The saints according to Revelation 6:11 and 7:9 will be “clothed with white robes.” To the Church of Laodicea, God urged, “...buy of me ... white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear” [Revelation 3:18].

Naked

When God made aprons for our first parents did He have to kill an animal? Are we talking "sacrifice" already!

Animal Sacrifice

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." = Genesis 3:21

Genesis 3:21 provides important insight into God's thoughts. For Him, fig leaves seemed inadequate as aprons to cover them. Why cover them at all? With God "all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" [Hebrews 4:13]. Animal skins, more correctly reads "aprons made of animal skin or hide." Some animal or animals were necessarily killed for this to happen, but the word is more correctly, *sacrificed*.

There are in the Old Testament different words meaning "to kill." One means to slaughter, as in war. Another speaks of a fatal blow or injury in a fight. Still another is used in Isaiah 29:1 where God voices His frustration with Jerusalem, "The Lion of God," the City of David! He sighs, "Year after year festivals! Let them *make* [mutilate] their sacrifices" God's disgust with the inhabitants of Jerusalem leads now to judgment [Isaiah 1:11]. In the margin this word is said to describe, "cutting off the head of the animal" [It alludes more to the method as with a swift strike.]

Another word, "to kill," we always used in paradigms while learning the Hebrew language. It means "to slay" as found in Job's testimony "though [even if] He *slay* me, yet will I trust Him!" [Job 13:15]. It is used only twice else in the Ancient Hebrew, once more in Job and once in the Psalms. It is found primarily in the Aramaic language in Daniel.

Another: there is the word used in the 6th commandment:: "Thou shalt not *murder*" [Exodus 20:13]. And there is another Hebrew word meaning "to slaughter an animal *for food*" [like our "to butcher"]. There remains only those words

Animal Sacrifice

meaning to sacrifice, though one, is used primarily of burnt offerings and other animal gifts made to the Lord. The word is dedicated to the activity of offering sacrifices to the Lord. In Exodus 34:25 we read of “The sacrifice of the feast of the passover.” And one form of this word refers to the place where the sacrifice is made or the altar. In Genesis 8:20 Noah created such an altar of stones to show His gratitude to God for deliverance and protection from the flood. This is the earliest reference to such an altar, but Noah building it begs the question how did he know that such a sacrifice would “please” the Lord! “And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake” [Genesis 8:21]. Is it inconceivable to imagine God, Himself, introduced this primitive sacrificial practice, which was all that was necessary if the heart was also involved in the moment. It is said, “By faith Abel offered unto God a[n] ... excellent sacrifice... by which he obtained witness that he was righteous” [Hebrews 11:4].

The question before us is: which word best describes God's preparing aprons for Adam and Eve? And why? In Genesis 2:16 Adam and Eve began as vegetarians. But by the time Abel comes along, sacrifices are a common practice [Genesis 4:4]. It is not unreasonable to believe that God offered the first sacrifice from which aprons were made for Adam and Eve, and in so doing, a sacrificial rite was inaugurated which has endured through time.

It seems God introduced a sacrificial system to the first family with certain limited instructions—no doubt—about blood and for worship and eating. It is not absurd to believe that Adam did have a fundamental understanding of what later was written down in Romans 3:25, “...God hath set forth [Jesus] to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his [God's] righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

Adam did not know about Jesus' coming crucifixion but it is incredulous to think God didn't have His Son on His mind and heart the day He slew an animal and made “aprons” from the hide! God would suspend a final punishment for sin to those

Animal Sacrifice

who would exercise their trust in Him through the giving of an animal sacrifice. Perhaps, animals were never simply killed for food. Their death became a sacrificial thank offering as well as a constant reminder of the consequence of disobedience and a reminder of those early days in Eden when walking with God in the cool evening air was what life was all about.

Cain

The reading of the Greek Old Testament regarding Cain's offering of fruit is curiously picturesque. [The Hebrew lacks the clarity of the Greek even though the Hebrew is the inspired text.] Genesis 4:5-7, reading in the New English Translation, "With Cain and his offering [God] was not pleased. So Cain became very angry [hot with rage, perhaps, a temper tantrum], and his expression was downcast [he went from rage to depression. He gave up on the idea of pleasing God through sacrifices]. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why is your expression downcast? [Verse 7]. Is it not true that if you do what is right, you will be fine? But if you do not do what is right [act proper], sin is crouching at the door. It desires to dominate you, but you must subdue it."

It is important to understand these few verses since they involve the early understanding of the sacrifice, how to present it and why. Even if the text does not detail this account, the narrative suggests there was much more shared with the first family. We should be able to have early glimpses of God's interest in Calvary. We know it was already on His mind and heart, not only because of the sacrifice, itself, but because He told us so [John 17:24; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:20]. "He has chosen us in Him *before the foundation of the world.*" In the New English Translation there is this footnote on Hebrews 11:4, "The Letter to the Hebrews explains the difference between the brothers [Cain and Abel] as one of faith—Abel by faith offered a better sacrifice. Cain's offering as well as his reaction to God's displeasure did not reflect faith."

An additional note is revealing with the translation beginning in verse 6 "Why are you angry ... [Verse 7] "Is it not

Animal Sacrifice

true that if you do what is right, you will be fine?" Another interpretation of verse 7 might read, "I encourage you: Do the right thing; it will lift your countenance!" [Unknown to Cain, Satan was getting ready to pounce.] Calm yourself, be at peace inside. Satan will be turned away and you will rule him [instead of him, you]. The NET footnotes, "Everything will be changed if he does well. God will show him favor, he will not be angry, and his face will reflect that. ... Here the desire is that which sin has for Cain, a desire to control him for the sake of evil, but Cain must have mastery over it." [<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen+4%3A5-7&version=NET>].

The Septuagint of verse 7 has been translated, "Hast thou not sinned if thou hast brought it rightly, but not rightly divided it? Be still! To thee shall be his submission, and thou shalt rule over him.." This seems a little cryptic. (Welcome to the Greek language!). The word translated "divided" generally means "to carry away" or "to exclude." We might interpret this to be meaning: If you bring your gift with a heart to give it [the right way], then it won't be excluded or rejected; but that is not what you did!

Cain didn't take God's warning seriously. He wasn't going to accept correction and this led to fratricide. "Where there is an evil heart, there is an evil eye, and where both these are, there is also an evil hand." [The Württemberg Bible, cp Lange, *Genesis*, vol I, 267].

So, we are led to surmise that sacrifices are not just a matter of practice [ritual] but of the heart and faith [trust in God]. When we follow God's instructions obediently there is that unseen hand that leads us away from sin and its consequences. All this in the first 4 chapters of our Bible! It seems to me far more reasonable to think that when God selected an animal for its "skin" to make aprons to deal with Adam and Eve's shame and fear, it was much more than an apron! And now we realize that through the sacrifice of Christ God has dealt with our fear of punishment [1 John 4:18] ...and our shame [Romans 5:5], as well.

Animal Sacrifice

Dispensationalism

This is the moment of transition in dispensational history in leaving Eden and entering now a world that needs a Savior. God will revisit a sinful world. Ever since that lonely walk in Eden looking for Adam [Genesis 3:9] God's visits have taken on a disquieting aura. A *visitation* of God was, as the word came to mean in Old Testament parlance, *punishment* [Exodus 20:5; 34:7] because of sin [Amos 3:2 ASV]. He visited mankind again at the Flood. Afterward, He visited His chosen people on Mount Sinai with an entire law code of sacrifices, dividing up the many reasons for offering them: for repentance, for thanksgiving, for reconciliation with God, willingly and by law .. And some just because they knew it pleased Him.

Ultimately He would go to Calvary, Himself, to end a system of sacrifices that only exposed man's sin but never could deal effectively with it. Jesus' death finally did what no other sacrifice of any consequence could do. Through the Cross and His death and resurrection—I want to say—Jesus is leading us back to Eden.

Monogamy

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help meet for him.” - Genesis 2:18

One of the most delightful subjects to talk about regarding Eden is the perfect couple. They were not only perfect individually but they were perfect for each other, perfect also when with one another, and it was no coincidence that they knew God. God couldn't say all this more clearly than He did when He made Eve from Adam's rib [Genesis 2:21-22].

Whether this is pure symbolism, or to be understood literally, is incidental, because the marriage of this happy couple is, itself, part explanation of the mystery which is our relationship with Christ [Ephesians 5:32]. What might be of benefit for a Christian couple in understanding this truth would be to work backwards. Emulate Christ in your relationship with one another [Ephesians 5:25; Philippians 2:1-2].

One might—through Scripture—interview Adam and Eve (but since their expulsion from Eden, it is doubtful they would be of much good). I imagine Milton would agree that it took a snake to bring Adam and Eve to their first fight [Genesis 3:12]—something which now we consider normal and actually healthy for emotional and interpersonal growth. We found a way to handle dynamite without blowing ourselves up. Good for us!

Husband and Wife Relations

If life is a learning experience, don't you wonder what God “taught” Adam? About Eve? About His idea of a heterosexual monogamy? About intimate relationships in general? Adam was introduced to a “creature” he was meeting

Monogamy

for the first time and probably each interchange of thought and word became a misunderstanding until Adam finally learned to hear not only what he thought she was saying but what he was convinced she was *not* saying. The old saying goes of a man that “he means what he says but he doesn’t say what he means” which only goes to prove that men and women are different in how they think and how they value things. Dr. Abram Maslow, an American psychologist and philosopher, affirmed that men and women are psychologically different. So when my wife tells me I don’t listen, she is partly correct. My real problem is understanding her.

So when God limited Adam to one wife at creation (which had to be a statement about monogamy) God placed 2 people together, both perfect in their own right, who were as different as 2 pieces to a puzzle but which would snap together to form a true picture of what marriage meant *to God*. We don’t know what that oneness [called the “henotic relationship”] was because what God said to Adam in Genesis 2:24 wouldn’t be said again until Jesus resurrected the idea [Matthew 19:5] and Paul would reference this truth as a metaphor describing Christ and the Church [Ephesians 5:31-32]. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” [Genesis 2:24].

This is the primary caution against sanctioning homosexuality, polyamory, or multiple partner intimacy, because it wasn’t in the divine design when God made *us for Himself*. He wanted us to have no other gods before Him [Exodus 20:3] and this relationship, in the context of our marriage to Christ, is simply and explicitly monogamous.

So Much To Learn

Though we have physiological needs for food and affection, for example, these are not instinctive but rather driven by the body, itself, and its need for constant attention. How to meet its needs is a learned experience not one we were born knowing. [The only response we were born with is the ability to suck at things—in more ways than one.]

Monogamy

I tell the delightful story (all true) of the day I thought I impregnated a classmate of mine when I was a freshman in high school because she “bumped” into me. My mother later assuaged my concern telling me the real way this happens, which, at the time, I thought was absolutely disgusting. Adam didn’t have a “mother” to explain such things. He had only—well—God!

While I am on the subject of “girls,” I always have had an unexplained pleasure in being with them, and talking to them. But I would have been the proverbial dog chasing the firetruck—not knowing what to do if I ever caught up to it.

Talk about unlearned! [We get our word “idiot” from the Greek word]. I was 20 years old when I took a summer job painting bridges for the New York State Thruway Authority. It was during lunch breaks the other men on the crew would talk about women and self-gratification—an idea foreign to me. Now, I am told everyone knows what this is!

Regrettably, for religious reasons, I was even denied the experience of going to a dance with a young Miss. Dancing put us “too close together.” So, even the smallest, seemingly, most insignificant, experience can add to our education or be lost to it. Cumulatively, we put life together—hopefully in a healthy and wholesome way.

For us, for humans, life is a learning experience and not something we automatically pick up on. Even language is learned in all 3 ways, learning to speak it, read it and understand it when heard. I recall my first class in college German in which the professor for the first few weeks spoke no English (even though we came in not knowing a word of German). But by the end of this short time, he was making sense—all in German. Then he shocked us by switching to English—to my great disappointment. But that’s not my tale. We were given a reading assignment in German and I found myself reading words I didn’t know until I—yes—read them *out loud* to myself! Just because my ear knew some German didn’t mean my eye did. I had to learn to read—all over again. How cool is that!

Part of learning is self-discovery. I found that when I held a young lady’s hand during roller skating, I liked it, even

Monogamy

though I had no thought of her beyond that moment. There was something called “The Kentucky Reel” where to organ music the boys and girls as couples would skate in a circle. The boys would advance one girl in the circle and hold the next girl’s hand each time a whistle was blown. I enjoyed every lass I held hands with—a most interesting discovery about myself, but something I would not give serious thought to for some years to come. In so many other ways I was not “street-wise” in the ways of treating “girls.”

And in that awkward condition I met my wife. We had nothing in common, other than a love for God [Yes! And each other!]
—and we were members of the same religious denomination. On many levels, married life would be a learning experience for both of us. Adam and Eve had free marriage counseling in God (as do we). But they probably needed less of it once they were “thoroughly” introduced. Married life would be decades of discovery, of getting it wrong, of failing at understanding the incomprehensible, of separating out need from want and learning which is a relational priority. Should I go on? And we have so many potential spouses out there to pick from unless, as my wife says, as with us, God winked. [Biblically I don’t know what this means which is another example of all I have been saying so far.]

Alone

God told us that we, men, should not be left unsupervised. Don’t leave a man alone! We need help! (I said “unsupervised” but God said “help.”) How does a wife “help” her husband? The most obvious reason for a man to have a wife is to beget and foster offspring. And we know that “oneness” [Genesis 2:24] includes a level of physical intimacy, else, Paul would not have cautioned men against prostitution [1 Corinthians 6:16]. But is that it! God gave Eve to Adam just to have children and other than that they could live apart!? Most assuredly, No! Oneness includes intimacy on more levels than just the physical. I cannot imagine that the God Who is Love [1 John 4:8] and who made marriage as an object lesson for Christ

Monogamy

and His Church, would ever be content with anything less than the purest and most divine love between Adam and Eve.

Help

If you look up the word “help” you will probably imagine the woman in charge of the man. Because of our first parents’ disobedience everything got flipped on its head. After sinning, the wife’s desire would be to please her husband, who in Biblical history became her master. “Your desire [longing] shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.” [Genesis 3:16—ouch!]. Whoever translated this verse into Greek read the word “turning” instead of “longing” [by changing one letter in the original word, which might be what the translator thought he saw] and the translator took that to mean her *submission* to her husband since the last part of the verse seems clear enough: He shall be your lord and master. Peter told us “Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord” [1 Peter 3:6]. Off the record, when he impregnated Hagar, Sarah went ballistic and God told him to listen to her. [Now, whose calling who, lord!] While Sarah lived there is no record of Abraham entertaining polygamy until after her death [Genesis 25:6]. Nonetheless, the woman in marriage is encouraged to be submissive or obedient, in our present “fallen” state, as an aspect of Christian moral teaching [Ephesians 5:22]. This was codified as a part of the wedding vows until the 1990’s when even Christian women asked it be expunged. Now they are introduced as “husband and wife,” no longer as “man and wife.”

This to the Baby Boomer generation in revolt became known as the “Patriarchal paradigm” in which women saw themselves enslaved and seeking to be liberated. In the Law of Moses, from which Christianity takes its cue, “every vow and every binding oath [a married woman makes], her husband may confirm it, or her husband may make it void.” [Numbers 30:13] The same is true of a single woman in relation to her dad because she will be living at home [Numbers 30:3-5].

But what did *help* mean or what might it have meant in Eden in that perfect relationship where we must surmise Eve

Monogamy

was Adam's equal. The Bible says God instructed Adam *not to* eat [Genesis 2:16-17] but Eve told Adam *to* eat! "She also gave to her husband with her" [Genesis 3:6].

If the "two shall be One" and Eve was created so that Adam would not be alone, then she was there to help him become whole. Is it so wrong to suggest that there were aspects of the human personality lacking in him but supplied by her? Her passion and resolve, her way of seeing what he does not see, the inner strength her love supplied, all, complete him in his humanity. It is because she is different that she is able to complete him. The saying "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" was never truer. "To feel the inner strength of someone for whom you were created. To realize being with him is opening up your mind and heart to endless possibilities. To hear yourself say 'I like myself when I'm with him.'" [This quote is from The Next Generation Season 5 Episode 21 The Perfect Mate]

Sin

Sin corrupted the marriage relationship turning it into something perverse, something God never intended it to be, something leading to divorce and a variety of gay, casual, and multiple intimate relations built on what I would call a "same puzzle piece" paradigm. Humanity struggles to understand—let alone, appreciate—the henotic relationship God spoke of [the two shall be one] between a man and a woman. So, many go in search for likeness not completeness, pleasure and not wholeness.

Men and women are both capable of objectifying each other. Love is selfish or what has been called "need love." We obtained spouses out of personal want and not any desire to enhance their happiness or meet their needs.

Put

Outside Eden human nature is lost because humanity, like fish in water, was created to be there. "The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and *there He put the man whom He had formed*' [Genesis 2:8]. There He [God] *put* Adam!

Monogamy

[Job 20:4]. This word, *put*, unadorned and not nuanced in its simplicity has been forgotten about in casual reading. It is (if memory serves) highlighted in a third grade reader. That is the sum of its notoriety. It is seen as ordinary, a word to connect two thoughts and nothing more. But this is our Old Testament and this is God! When He spoke of putting His name on the Temple Solomon built in Jerusalem, apparently to Him [God] this was big! "I have consecrated this house which you have built to *put* My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually" [1 Kings 9:3]. We also read at the end of Ezekiel's prophecy "the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE." [Ezekiel 48:35].

In the heart and thoughts of God connecting Adam with Eden was not inconsequential. Who plants a garden of selected vegetables and then decides to put it any old place—say, in a field of wild flowers. We tend to prepare the ground specific for what we plant. We care if it is too acidic or alkaline. No! God knew what He was doing and wanted to do it when He *put* Adam in Eden!

And this is our problem in its most elementary sense: we were driven out! It had to be because we introduced evil into it. I recall being asked to paint the house of this elderly German couple living in a community north of Buffalo, New York, where I lived. I was a teenager but had some experience already painting houses. [At the time I had a steady hand and a reasonably good eye as well as could climb ladders on a hot summer's day.] On the first day after putting my brushes away, I decided to wash my hands with turpentine (or gasoline, can't recall) over "her" flower bed along the side of the house. (Kids are stupid!) I had no idea what she said—all in German, I guess—but I knew what she meant. It would never happen again! People cherish and protect their gardens.. And why not God?

But the larger point is: we, men, were placed in Eden, God's luxurious garden of pleasures, for a reason and then introduced to this "person" called "woman" whose presence alone switched on all our lights and cause them to blink wildly. Whatever God was up to, we liked it! And she was commissioned by God *not* to *obey* us but to *help* us. All this

Monogamy

luxury for a man is overwhelming. He doesn't seem to know how to enjoy it as God must have intended—but she knows! With her, he will discover feelings he never thought he had, pleasures he never could experience on his own. This could go on for eternity and the day after he would wake up loving her even more!

The Family

In biblical terms, a man and a woman, together, begins a family, the most fundamental social unit. But social evolution, as an idea, leads many to believe they can move past this antiquated Edenic arrangement. Here we want to ask: what was that Edenic arrangement? What did God have in mind when He thought “family”? [Genesis 1:28]. In the language of Scripture, a family can be extended to include a circle of relatives, a tribe [Numbers 1:2], stemming from a common ancestry and, in still a wider sense, a nation [Genesis 12:3]. How is this not describing the spousal relationship as the basic building block of society? When He called the two of them *one* what exactly was He creating? If it wasn't one family, one ...*what*? “It was not good for Adam to be alone,” God meant, “I will give him family.”

The key relationship in the family is spousal. How do we know this? Simply put: God didn't create the children for them! He didn't add aunts and uncles on the 6th day as a group of unrelated beings. He told Adam and Eve to do it! As Eve was bone of Adam's bone, the children would be bone of their bone [Genesis 29:14].

The Sabbath

“And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” - Genesis 2:2

God resting from His labors on day 7 speaks to us, but we must be careful not to confuse this divine action with the 4th commandment and yet they are related. “The assertion, so frequently made, that ... the idea of God’s resting on the seventh day, is taken from the institution of the Hebrew Sabbath,” Dr. Keil cautions, “is entirely without foundation.” [Keil, *Genesis*, vol I, 41]. Is it important that God paused His labors after 6 days instead of 5 or 4? Is day 7 significant for the same reason[s] God gave Moses the commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day (the 7th day of the week) and keep it holy [Exodus 20:8] or is this historical note looking ahead to a time when “all toiling will be over.” “So there is a special [Sabbath] rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God’s rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world” [Hebrews 4:9-10]. Thayer calls this sabbath rest “the blessed rest from toils and troubles looked for in the age to come by the true worshipers of God.” [Thayer, 565]. Since this day, therefore, was a part of Creation week, it is part of the Eden Story and ours.

The 7th Day

This entire narrative has to maintain a day to be 24 hours of time or 1 rotation of the earth, but cosmologists, astronomers, geologists, and astro-physicists continue to describe the first 6 days of Creation in billions of years. Once the earth and all life were created, Adam, now, could set his clock by how time is

The Sabbath

normally measured [Today time is measured in the vibrations of an electron circling the Cesium 133 atom in atomic clocks, and not the earth's rotation any more]. Nonetheless, a "day" in Genesis 1:5 was *not* defined—even here—by the earth's rotation but by the position of the light [Sunlight and Moonlight] and these were not specifically set in place until Genesis 1:16 or day 4.

I would rather explain how a flat screen TV works, though, I haven't the slightest idea how it works. Some truths required a narrative because they are part of the story but often the task is daunting. All should believe that the beginning of all things is, most assuredly, part of God's story and us and we need to know that this narrative is historically accurate and not fable!

"It is as if the first chapter of the Bible was deliberately included to make difficulties for people who want to believe biblical teachings," says Dr. Schroeder, tongue in cheek, [but] "the beginning" to the appearance of mankind *did* take six days and 15 billion years—*simultaneously*—starting at the same instant and finishing at the same instant." [Schroeder, 28-9]. Professor Schroeder in "Genesis and the Big Bang" explains it all, if you care to find out. Dr. Schroeder is, himself, a physicist staying true to his profession and his faith. To trigger your interest: it has to do with time, time that was "stretched" according to Einstein's theory of Relativity, which has been proven correct.

So, bottom line, if 7 days are 7 24 hour periods of time from earth's perspective—and they are—there is no problem and, perhaps, I needlessly wrote this section. But for the few who might be flummoxed, get his book (for you and you only I included an appendix).

God Rested!

God rested? I cannot imagine God tired and needing rest. More than that, I cannot imagine Him not creating. He creates when He speaks [Genesis 1:6] and His breath is life giving [Genesis 2:7]. Perhaps rest marked a change of activity. The scripture says He "rested from all his work" but qualified this adding, "which God created and made." [Genesis 2:3]. He

The Sabbath

went to gardening instead [Genesis 2:8] for a while. The word certainly does not imply that God is through creating! Deists are wrong [2 Corinthians 5:17]. The word “work” used in Genesis 2:2 can refer to a person’s occupation or business—what he busies himself about. Lexicographers are wary of using this meaning here because it is God and they must know how we love to theologize—even the absurd. But after a respite He will create again because it is what He does.

Rest is a pause, a respite, from labor. Even the land has a rest every 7th year in God’s economy [Leviticus 26:34-35]. In a very real sense, the land without rest is exhausted or depleted of its nutrients for plant growth. As with land, human weariness requires rest and times of restoration or refreshing. Pharaoh denied the Israelites their “breaks” from carting bricks around [Exodus 5:5]. The word used is “wearisomeness and laborious toils.” They needed time off at least 1 day in 7 but it was not to be until God told them to just quit.

But this is a human condition requiring rest. It is part of our mortality. It seems that, in heaven when we are immortal and when sickness and death are not possible, rest will have to take on another significance. Heaven might be “all” rest! But it is no coincidence that the spellings of the word “to rest” [in Hebrew] and the word “to observe the Sabbath” [also in Hebrew] are *the same*. This oversimplifies things grammatically but it is difficult not to believe they share a common origin, Genesis 2:2-3, when God “sanctified” the “day.”

God not only set this day apart from the other 6, but, He set it apart *for Himself*. He hallowed it [The word is written in an emphatic or intensified sense meaning sacred, hallowed, holy, consecrated to God]. The 7th day must never again be thought of as “just another day” to work. Christians have made Sunday that day while Jews designated Friday night to Saturday night as the 7th day. I think Seventh Day Adventists prefer Saturdays. Friday night was Moses’ choice but with Adam we are only told 1 in 7 and we do not know which day was the 7th. God, Who made us, built into our mortal frame a need for rest 1 day in 7—whether this rest is simply a change of pace (don’t do whatever it is you do during the week) or it is a day of complete rest (find a couch

The Sabbath

with pillows somewhere after a good meal). If the day is *holy* [Exodus 20:8] we should put the focus on our relationship with God—feed *it*, celebrate *it*. You can understand how these are 2 different matters but a single day of our week can serve both.

The Fourth Commandment says, “Remember” the Sabbath Day. Remember the day *coming* at the end of the work-week? We tend to remember things past. But this commandment receives 2 verses [Exodus 20:9]. In 6 days you do all your work, so that Sunday will be always your day to celebrate your relationship with God, Set it aside for Him. Keep it holy. Keep it always separate from what you do for a living, or on a regular basis for work, on the other 6.

Adam

At first I thought that if a day of rest was set aside because we tend to weary from labor, that’s a human condition because we are mortal. God didn’t need a mortal man’s rest; so, He must have known ahead of creating Adam and Eve that they were going to disobey and would soon find life toilsome. Consequently, a Sabbath’s rest is just what the doctor ordered. If God foreknew, did He plan things that way?

But I reconsidered things: If the Sabbath was chosen by God as a day off *for Himself and* the first couple, strolling peacefully through Eden enjoying sweet and inspiring discourse—Adam and Eve learning all about God’s creation—you get the picture—this day would serve *both God and* man!

I am inclined on reflection to believe this. I think God wanted to have “baked in” provision for Adam and Him to “get to know one another—and this is great theology! “I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God” [Jeremiah 24:7]. “Why did God make them at all,” Athanasius reasoned, “(if) He did not wish to be known by them?” [Athanasius. 24]

Heaven

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” - Revelation 2:7

Imagine the picture of heaven painted by the same artist and with the same brush stroke that gave us Eden. That Artist is God. God has always been from eternity past (He is the Ancient of Days) probably planning Eden and then Heaven. We have come to the border of our imagination here and God works outside that border. Isaiah wrote, “Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.” [Isaiah 64:4 NIV; 2 Corinthians 2:9].

Lord God

Genesis 2:4 reads, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,” Here is the first of 11 verses referring to our Lord as the God of Genesis 1. We can conclude this because the first 3 verses of chapter 2 complete the week of creation and more correctly belong with the first chapter. What this postulates is that the document hypothesis which claims different authors for chapters 1 and 2— based on the names for God, Elohim or Jehovah [Yahweh]—cannot be correct because the names here are written *together* to affirm that Jehovah [Yahweh] the God of Israel *is* the God of Creation! Though this might seem obvious to the Christian reader many Gnostic and pagan myths and pantheistic religions promoted the idea of 2 or more gods involved in creation.

Heaven

It is not my purpose here to write an apologetic for the faith but only to promote that faith and a belief that Jehovah's Eden "vision" [what God plans ultimately for His people] was never through the changing circumstances of Biblical history ever discarded.

Eden as a perfect environment still underlined the importance of the Cross because not even a perfect world was sufficient to protect Adam and Eve from themselves. As we affirmed: obedience is a learned response—as it was for Jesus [Hebrews 5:8]. As long as the tempter roams the earth, God's grace alone is sufficient to restore the believer's faith as a shield to quench all Satan's fiery darts [Ephesians 6:16].

But Eden is more. Eden is a vision of heaven, of a world to come were Satan is no longer free to climb the wall—as Milton wrote.

Restoration

Restoration in Isaiah was described as a return from Exile to Eden, the Garden of God. "The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing." [Isaiah 51:3]. Isaiah, after referencing God's covenant promise to Abraham, [verse 1-2] enjoins those who "follow after righteousness [and] seek the LORD" to "look." Jerusalem in their memory had lain in ruins, something they could not look on [Psalm 127]. Now, the Lord encourages them to turn their attention once again to their beloved city and see what God is doing. He is making it like Eden! "The news to exiles is that the force of 'new creation' will be enacted in that wounded, beloved city." Walter Brueggemann interprets, "No wonder the restored city will be a place of unending ... joy, gladness, thanks, song ... commensurate with the marvelous gift of new life..." [Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 126].

It is noteworthy that God would still have Eden on His heart—noteworthy—but not unexpected. In Ezekiel 36, God

Heaven

promised restoration to Israel comparing this to Eden: “And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden” [verse 35]. God promises to rescue His people “from among the heathen, and gather [them] out of all countries, and bring [them] into [their] own land. [Verse 24]. But He does this for His own name’s sake [verse 22]. “I will sanctify my great name” the Lord resolves, “... among the heathen... the heathen shall know that I am the LORD.” Such texts as this scream “Grace! Grace!” [Zechariah 4:7]. Referencing His Garden, the Lord then promises, “... the heathen... shall know that I the LORD ... replanted [ESV] that which was desolate.” [verse 36].

In Ezekiel 28 God instructed the prophet to “raise a lamentation “ over the king of Tyre [verse 12] at the destruction of the city [verse 7-10]. He, God, compared the beauty of Tyre to Paradise reminding the king that all that Tyre became in splendor was at the hand of God [verse 13-14]. C. F. Keil wrote, “Ezekiel here compares the situation of the prince of Tyre with that of the first man in Paradise.” [Keil, *Ezekiel*, vol IX, 410]. “You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering, the ruby, topaz, and emerald, the chrysolite, onyx, and jasper, the sapphire, turquoise, and beryl; your settings and mounts were made of gold. On the day you were created they were prepared.” [Ezekiel 28:13].

In some vague and—understandably, but respectfully—general sense God never did get over the loss of “Eden.” And it seems reasonable to believe He never will because it was the perfect place for Him and His creation to live together in pure and unrestricted happiness.

Pleasure

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. - 1 Corinthians 12:10

When God made Eve attractive to Adam, he empowered her with the gift of persuasion. In a sense, it would have been easier for Adam to say “no” to a snake than to refuse her when she handed him a piece of forbidden fruit. Eve didn’t need to deceive Adam by lying to him, by hiding from him from which tree she got it. Or maybe she took her man to the tree to “look for himself.” It makes no difference. She could be honest about her encounter with the snake and her interpretation of their conversation and Adam was still vulnerable to her smile and charm.

A woman’s charm is a powerful force for good or evil. Perhaps, this is the idea God had in mind calling her a “help” in Genesis 2:18—only like dynamite in the hands of a demolition expert it can move mountains out of the way or simply blow things up. Was Adam prepared for these new feelings coursing through his body every time she was near! Was Adam, frankly, able to entertain an independent thought in her presence—not because she ever wanted to rule him but because he turned to putty every time she was around. What man, for love’s sake, does not want to please the woman he loves?

And should we, in some sense, credit God with giving Adam passions that were wildly unpredictable, excitingly new, and overwhelmingly pleasurable? It was as if man was created unbalanced, needing a few more brains and a little less passion. And if God is worthy consideration in this matter, dare we

Pleasure

wonder if God made Adam with this built-in emotional trigger that made somethings tempting—*really* tempting?

Be not deceived: That fateful day
When serpents had too much to say
When summer fruit bedecked the tree
Where Adam had no right to be—
Forbidden pleasures he should resist.
But did his lovely Eve insist?
She took a bite; and thought the while
She'd shared it ...only, with a smile!

Weakness

Cigarettes are not my weakness and I don't know why—unless it is thanks to Mrs. Dinatelli, the elderly Italian neighbor, that caught me taking a puff on a discarded cigarette butt when I was about 8 or 9. She raked me over the coals—all in her native tongue—and what a tongue she had. I couldn't translate (not knowing Italian) but I still knew where she was going in her tirade. I would never draw another puff on one again even though her granddaughter, who was like a sister to me over the years, would become addicted to the things. Often during the summer months we would spend time together while she “lite up” and no part of me ever wanted her to share the moment.

But this doesn't suggest that I was immune to temptation. Some temptations are not—like drugs—introduced to us by the people around us. Some are triggered by the desire for happiness and the ability to feel pleasure that God has built into our psychological and physiological makeup. It is almost as if God made us for the tree and not the tree for us! Everything attractive about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was a natural beauty, a natural attraction. And Eve's thoughts were a natural response which Satan played on—as the Savior told us the devil would. This was Jesus' experience [But He said, “No!”]: “But he [Jesus] turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan!

Pleasure

You are a stumbling block to me, because you are not setting your mind on God's interests, *but on man's.*" [Matthew 16:23].

Luxurious Eden

You are thinking: here comes another sermon on the many vices that will get us (metaphorically speaking) kicked out of God's Eden? No! This isn't about *leaving* Eden but *getting back in!* Surely, if God made us capable of experiencing pleasure, it had to be mean something other to Him than a tool to trip us up, get us to disobey and then take Eden from us. I take James literally: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, *neither tempts he any man.*" [James 1:13].

Is it possible God wanted us to experience an "above the clouds" high level of happiness and satisfaction in the enjoyment of His gifts [one of the biggest was spousal intimacy]? Is it possible that Heaven will be so glorious we must have new bodies that will be able to sustain the jolt this happiness will generate? I don't know why I did it but I once hooked a cassette player (remember those?) up to house current. Need I say more!

Perhaps, Genesis 50:20 is applicable here but with a twist: "You thought evil [the devil was in Eden] but God meant it for good," Satan tempts in order to take a natural response and corrupt it: Satan takes a "hunger and thirst" which should be after righteousness and turns it into greed. [I should list Scripture here but I will leave that to the scholars among us.] He takes a desire to know God and makes it a religious practice only—or worse. He takes a natural love of another's closeness and a need for intimacy and turns it into something vulgar and shameful. He takes a zeal for good and uses it to support religious wars.

There was nothing evil in Adam when he was created. There was nothing evil about Eve when she was created. And when we return to Eden—not in a literal sense necessarily [although, I like trees] but in terms of the luxurious [glorious] living our first parents experienced before their last meal—all the joy, happiness, pleasure of Heaven will be our shared experience.

Pleasure and Happiness

There is nothing wrong with pleasure, *per se*, since it should be recognized as an Edenic experience. But what must be underscored is that Edenic happiness is always a communicated satisfaction of a need and not a self-sustained gratification of a want. It is the different between another through love meeting one's need on some level and someone through want taking it without consideration of the consequences on some level to the relationship: personal, familial, communal.

The source for every form of happiness is reducible to one of these: either someone gives love or someone steals it. Since God has made us for love and fellowship, for community, belonging, sharing, etc. He has equipped us to give what is needed to another and receive from another in our need. The pleasure, happiness, joy is now shared because it is given as an expression of grace [love] and not taken as an expression of self [greed or hubris].

Even judgment follows this paradigm. A retributive justice is taken because the recipient is required to submit. A restorative justice is given because the recipient is invited to receive it. The first is wrathful; the second an example of care and concern.

On this the allelous [Greek for "one another"] principle is founded in Scripture and is the structural support for all Christian fellowship. "[They] were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked" [Acts 4:32, 34]. It is the "Law of Christ" [Galatians 6:2; 1 Peter 5:5]. We are to be "comforted together" [Romans 1:12]; "kindly affectioned one to another" [Romans 12:10]; "having the same care one for another" [1 Corinthians 12:25]; "by love serving one another" [Galatians 5:13]; "submitting ... one to another in the fear of God" [Ephesians 5:21].

Pleasure, like luxury, gets a bad wrap when it is the product of greed or hubris. It becomes carnal behavior. But what pertains to the flesh or associated with human needs is only

Pleasure

carnality when it is “taken” never when it is an expression of grace: gifted and unearned. To simplify, for definition’s sake, we take what we “want” but another gives what we “need.”

A Taste of Heaven

On this basis, christian fellowship and community is a Spirit led unity that we might call a taste of heaven. We must not think that we were made for the fading joys of this mortality. We were made for something far greater, something eternal, something only God could create, something God envisioned in a place He called “Eden.”

Was not Eden that “taste” for Adam and Eve before they sinned? Eden was their home! Deep inside every Adam and Eve there is an unconscious longing to return to the Garden. Here was our birthplace. Eden was our birthright. Here was where God dwelt. Here was where we found Him walking in the cool evening air. Here with Him is where we belong!

Eden was a garden embroidered—as Milton called it—with an endless variety of blooms, with fragrances that awakened memories of heaven, with stately trees that reached above the clouds in grandeur and inspired us to a faith beyond our imagination.

He left us with hints of that eternity in His love for us. He left us His Spirit, that divine guarantee, that like the wind unseen but real moves among us ever calling us to that eternal hope when God will again bring us to Eden. This time, we will be shown the Tree of Life and this time, we shall eat.

And what about all the heart-throbbing pleasures Eden must have represented? Now in later years I recall younger days when many of the passions that enflame young hearts, ablaze with natural desire, seemed insatiable; they are now replaced with quiet glowing embers of a promise of another Eden with Christ. Yesterday’s visions are today’s memories. Yesterday’s dreams, today’s hope.

Epilogue

The LORD will comfort Israel again ... Her desert will blossom like Eden, ... Joy and gladness will be found there. Songs of thanksgiving will fill the air. - Isaiah 51:3 NLT

When I pick up my Hebrew Bible and read the stories found in our Old Testament in the original language I am left with a different understanding of their value to us. R. K. Harrison points out that "...the theological concepts of the Old Testament do not lend themselves with particular readiness to any attempt at systematization...." [Harrison, 479]. In other words, any theology we extract has to be gleaned rather than harvested—nothing is given in the Old Testament as an intentional theological point—unlike Paul's Letter to the Romans in which the first 11 chapters are intentionally theological in content.

I don't think God concerned Himself with whether He was projecting supralapsarianism or infralapsarianism. These are big words for kindergartners as me and you. The narrative of the Old Testament is the Story of God seeking a relationship with His creation and how all else has failed before His Son came to die for sin. The Old Testament is a tragic love story but with the promise of restoration—which, we know, came through Christ.

An Apology

I must apologize for asking: Why did God, who was from Eternity past the Ancient of Days, wait so long to create Eden? This question is only intended to raise our awareness that "eternity" is not a logical word. To conceptualize "forever and ever" [I don't know why we need the second 'ever' here] is a bit

Epilogue

like the mathematical “infinity.” It is a concept that says that we have come to the end of our understanding. When we say that eternity is time without end, we are incorrect because time measures decay or growth and any measurement is limited by definition: how long? An endless time would speak of a decaying process or a growing season that could not be determined or was determined to be unending! But in heaven there are no clocks or calendars to promote such an idea!

Jewish thought understood eternal to mean indefinite but limited, making it a part of the time line of whatever is seen as eternal. The Kingdom of David, for example, Isaiah spoke of: “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” [Isaiah 9:7]. The NET English version interpreted this to mean “immeasurable prosperity ...justice and fairness, from this *time* forward and forevermore”

But eternity is outside time! How do we know this? The Bible says so. In Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning [of time] God create the heavens and earth.” Compare Genesis 1:14-16 He made the “greater light [the sun] ... for seasons, and for days, and years” with Revelation 22:5 “they need no ... light of the sun....” Before time there was only God, The Ancient of Days [Daniel 9:7, 13, 22]. With the New Jerusalem, the new heavens and new earth God switches the sun off because time is no more.

Did you know, for another example, that matter is associated with time; *light is not!* According to Einstein, who has been proven correct, the speed of light is a *constant*. Light’s speed never changes and if it does not change there is no reason to measure it. They use it to measure other things changing in time. [Now, I apologize for this apology.]

We are getting to where I want to go. Hang on just a while longer. Atheists cannot believe that God is eternal but want to theorize that the universe is. Or if the universe is not eternal what “triggered” it into existence? Where did “time” come from, if not from God? One of the greatest mysteries is death, itself, because it means the end of something or someone

Epilogue

in time. But in Heaven, in eternity, there will not even be a word for such a thing because it has nothing to do with what is eternal.

We need to talk in terms of time just like the physicist wants to talk about “particles” when really describing energy (I just had to add this for those who might appreciate it). We, too, can only logically imagine eternity in terms of time—endless time or time without end. And this is Okay. But let me throw another question your way (just for fun): Where was the man when he jumped off the cliff? If you say “in the air” that was *after* he jumped! If you say, then, still on the cliff, that was *before* he jumped. Where was he *when* he jumped? *When is a question of time.* When can only refer to that *time* period sandwiched between the past and the future—our present time. In between before he jumped and after he jumped was when he jumped, but such an act has no meaning. It is just bad English! Did you know that in the Hebrew or our Old Testament there is no way to describe present time because every act is seen as either complete or incomplete—that’s all. Even the New Testament honors this idea because the Greek present speaks of continuous activity regardless of time. [Now, I apologize for the apology I gave apologizing for what I said in earlier chapters.]

The Foreknowledge of God

“Foreknowledge” is a word described or understood in the context of time not the changelessness of eternity. To me, it is just one more word that is used to explain things to creatures of time as we. More than this, it tries to answer the “when” question: “When did God know it?” It has no practical meaning to an Eternal God other than to help us know that He knows. In Exodus 3:7 God tells Moses, “I know their sorrows.” The omniscience of God is more a matter *that* He knows rather than *when* He knows it. If He learned of our plight a moment ago or anticipated it prophetically from the beginning (the foundation of the world)—should it matter to us? Might we be accusing Him of causing it! Shame on us!! Yes, He permits the trials of life to occur but they are intended to “prove our trust” in Him

Epilogue

according to Peter and James [1 Peter 1:7; James 1:3-4]. Everything provides serious context for us to develop a relationship with Him, whom to know is life eternal—as Jesus, Himself, said, “...this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God...” [John 17:3; 1 John 5:20].

Eden

And what about Eden? What about pleasure and luxury? When Adam and Eve left, they left these behind for a greater prize—a treasure of far greater worth—learning outside Eden what they didn’t learn in Eden—to trust and obey. I, for one, don’t blame God, for taking Eden away and providing through the provision of Calvary something far more luxurious and glorious. Believers must know what I am trying to say here. There is a greater happiness to be found in following Christ than could ever be obtained through luxurious living. If I might paraphrase Ephesians 5:18 “And be not drunk on pleasure, wherein is excess; but be filled with [led by] the Spirit;”

When we get to heaven, the carnal nature will be replaced with a spiritual one [1 Corinthians 15:44] that will once again make the luxurious living in God’s Garden a reality. There was no sin in Eden. There was sin in Adam and that was why He needed to leave. Eden remained, pure and holy, God’s Garden. “The LORD will comfort Israel again ... Her desert will blossom like Eden, ... Joy and gladness will be found there. Songs of thanksgiving will fill the air.” [Isaiah 51:3 NLT].

Eden awaits us!

Appendix

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!!

This appendix is raw footage of an idea offered in a work edited by James Beilby and Paul R Eddy, *“Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views.”* It is in my words which might misrepresent Professor William Craig’s explanation of Middle Knowledge but it is “how I see it.”

Who do we blame for the loss of Eden? “Adam was formed first,” Paul reminded us, “and then Eve. And Adam was *not deceived*, but the woman, because she was *fully deceived*, fell into transgression” [1 Timothy 2:13-14 NET]. This verse uses 2 different words though similar, and even, possibly, at times, synonymous, for *deceived*: Adam was “deceived” but Eve was “fully deceived.” [Some Greek versions use only one word for both Adam and Eve.] Because of the close contrast in this context, it seems that a stronger meaning is intended for the second word in reference to Eve.

So, who do we blame?

- ◆ Eve? Johann Albrecht Bengel, a German clergyman and Greek scholar, wrote, “Deception indicates less strength in the intellect, and this ... is why a woman is not allowed to teach.” He saw Eve vulnerable and, therefore, all women. That’s kind-of harsh! [See Lange, on *Timothy*, vol XI, 34].
- ◆ Adam? Paul said, “...sin entered the world through *one man*” [Romans 5:12].
- ◆ Maybe even God? Let’s talk “middle knowledge.”

About the first six days of Creation. 15 Billion years or 6 days?

Adam's Sin

How Adam's sin imputes to all men isn't so clearly explained in Scripture. This is probably more a translation issue than some reason on God's part not to reveal it to us. Adam's disobedience brought death upon all but nowhere is it said to be the reason we disobey! The idea of a fallen human nature might be true but it is only thought to be in our explanations and not the Biblical text. [The New Living Translation of the New Testament uses the phrase "sinful nature" 27 times only in Paul's Epistles referring to "the flesh."]

A key verse to know is **Romans 5:12**, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, *for that* [because] all have sinned." Saint Augustine read this verse in an Old Latin translation; The final phrase "for that all have sinned" he understood to mean, "in whom [Adam] all sinned." This is not the well-accepted translation of the Greek word, "*for*." If we fault Adam for anything it is that, as Francis Godet wrote, "he laid human life open to the power of sin." By "sin" we mean the revolt of all mankind against God. Some see Adam as our representative or proxy in Eden; so, when he sinned, he did it on our account. We only know that God decided that there was only one way to save Adam and all mankind—through Christ. The first Adam introduced us to evil; the Last Adam defeated and removed it. Paul's message is *grace*.

A Few Things We Do Know

(1) Because of Adam's disobedience, God would forbear any punishment until Christ came [**Romans 3:25-26**]. Meanwhile mankind is denied access to the Tree of Life [**Genesis 3:22, 24**].

Adam's Sin

(2) As Paul said in 2 other verses, **Romans 11:32** and **Galatians 3:22**, "God has concluded [imprisoned: held] everyone in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all and that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to us who believe. The word, "concluded" means to hold in prison. This is good news! God was saying that aside from His mercy and Faith in Christ, there is no pathway back to Eden and to Him—there is no salvation and no freedom from the bondage to sin. God passed judgment on mankind, not to punish but to show mercy (grace). Scripture is saying that when Adam was escorted out of Eden, God knew that He would be required [**Matthew 26:39**] to send His Son to Calvary before mankind would have another opportunity to eat of the Tree of Life [**Revelation 22:14**].

Romans 5:19 tells us, "as by one man's disobedience many were deemed [made] sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be deemed [made] righteous" "Made" is the wrong word. The Greek means more at "appointed" or "declared." Most Protestants have no problem translating the second clause this way: " by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be deemed [declared] righteous." This supports God's decision to "conclude all in unbelief."

(3) Thirdly, Paul called us all sinners. This word used for sinning, meaning to "miss the target," is defined in **Romans 3:23** as "coming up short of the Glory of God [the target]. It was for His glory and to glorify Him we were created and now we missed that highest of callings [Psalm 86:9, 12; Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 6:20].

Whatever happened with Adam, God saw it as an evil touching all mankind. One commentary says, "When Adam sinned, the human race sinned, because the human race was in Adam." Augustine then declared "The entire human race that was to pass through woman into offspring was contained in the first man... and humanity produced what humanity became...." [Augustine, "On the City of God" 13,3].

The Fall of Adam

In **Romans 5:15** [NET] we read "...if the many died through the transgression of the one man, how much more did ... the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ multiply to the

Adam's Sin

many!" (1) The word "transgression" here comes from a Greek word meaning "to deviate from or wander off the path." It is probably here that Saint Augustine coined the terms "The Fall" and "original sin." (2) Paul seemed to be saying: If we all died through Adam's disobedience [and we did!] now Jesus' death can provide by faith the eternal life we lost when Adam was driven out of Eden [1 **Corinthians 15:21**]. What Adam broke, Jesus fixed.

Was the "Fall" a possible euphemism for what Paul called "a crooked and perverse nation" [Philippians 2:15]. Moses spoke similarly of "a perverse and crooked generation" [Deuteronomy 32:5]. As did Jesus [Matthew 17:17].

I asked A.I. Who first used the phrase "The fall of Adam"?

The phrase "The Fall of Adam" refers to the biblical story in the Book of Genesis, where Adam and Eve's disobedience to God leads to their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. While the phrase itself doesn't appear as a direct quotation from the Bible, it's commonly used in theological and literary contexts to refer to the event of humanity's first sin.

The specific phrase "*The Fall of Adam*" likely emerged in Christian theological discussions and literature, as early Christian writers, such as St. Augustine, explored the implications of Adam and Eve's fall from grace. Augustine's work *Confessions* (circa 400 CE) and *The City of God* (early 5th century CE) were among the first to deeply reflect on this event.

The phrase itself could have been popularized in later Christian writings and theological texts, especially in the context of the doctrine of original sin. It became a common term to describe the moment when Adam, the first human according to Christian theology, disobeyed God and introduced sin into the world.

Though it's hard to pinpoint exactly who "first used" the phrase, it became widely recognized as part of Christian doctrine over the centuries.

Justification Through Christ

Adam's Sin

Paul, finally, argues in **Romans 5:16** "for the judgment was [caused] by one [Adam] to condemnation, but the free gift [through Jesus' death] is of many offenses unto justification." Perhaps, we should not leave unnoticed that in **Romans 5:15** Paul's attention was on the sin, whereas in verse 16, it was on the sinner, who was ultimately God's interest. God's move to expel Adam and Eve from Eden was not an act of punishment, as if, all God could think about was their disobedience. His thoughts were on the sinner—on us. God evicted Adam and Eve as an act of mercy anticipating the day when Christ would die and rise again to provide for our justification [**Romans 4:25**].

Middle Knowledge

Given the following definitions and quote (by William Craig in *“Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views”* James K. Beilby & Paul R. Eddy, eds., Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL.: 2001) consider the following metaphor as explanatory of God’s foreknowledge, providence, and predestination.

- ◆ **Counterfactuals** - hypothetical statements in the subjunctive mood, the set of possibilities within scope of any circumstance. Our “what if’s” but God knows! All future possibilities contingent on current possibilities and choices we make foreknown by God. Also called “middle knowledge.”
- ◆ **Fatalism** - The doctrine that all things happen according to necessity.
- ◆ **Natural Knowledge** - God’s knowledge of all necessary truths, including all possibilities logically prior to his creative decree [Genesis 1:1].
- ◆ **Middle Knowledge** - God’s knowledge of all true counterfactuals about what creatures would freely do under any circumstances logically prior to his creative decree.
- ◆ **Molinism** - named after 16th-century Spanish Jesuit priest and Roman Catholic theologian Luis de Molina, is the thesis that God has middle knowledge: the knowledge of counterfactuals.... It seeks to reconcile the apparent tension of divine providence and human free will. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molinism>]

Craig wrote: “Middle knowledge can help us understand how God knows truth about the future. Divine foreknowledge is based on God’s middle knowledge of what

Middle Knowledge

every creature would freely do under any circumstances and on His knowledge of the divine decree to create certain sets of circumstances and to place certain creatures in them. Given middle knowledge and the divine decree, foreknowledge follows automatically as a result.

Of course, the skeptic may ask how God knows counterfactual's concerning human free choices if those choices do not exist. Molirrists could respond either that God knows the individual essence of every possible creature so well that He knows just what each creature would do under any set of circumstances He might place him/her in, or that God, being omniscient, simply discerns all the truths there are and, prior to the divine decree, there are not only necessary truths but counterfactual truths, and therefore God possesses not only natural knowledge but middle knowledge as well." [Craig, 133].

If God made the game of chess, the natural knowledge would include the game board and the pieces [God made the Earth and its resources] and the various moves [rules by which] each piece is capable [middle knowledge]. He ordered or arranged the board in a checker-board fashion but unlike checkers, God's middle knowledge envisioned the rules by which each piece is capable of moving. The Divine decree is the end of the game in capturing the "King."

The counterfactual truths are the total number of "possible" moves which become more critical as the game progresses or as the circumstances change by the arrangement of the pieces on the board. God's middle knowledge includes what He knows about *us*, the players, you and me [Acts 15:8].

Accessing God's middle knowledge in prayer amounts to asking Him "What if I move my knight, is this wise ...my queen? etc.?" [1 Samuel 23:11-13]. A belief that God's foreknowledge requires He predestine all things or His providence direct all things [Isaiah 55:11; Romans 8:29] is fatalistic. Divine Providence has more to do with the rules of the game, knowing the players, and being "in the game" Himself, than controlling players' moves.

The best example was the Savior's pending death [Acts 2:23] that went according to a divine plan which God knew

Middle Knowledge

would be executed [no play on words intended]. When Jesus prayed in the Garden that this cup of suffering pass from Him, He then declared it His move also. “Nevertheless, Thy will be done” [Matthew 26:42].

Fatalism, or determinism, is more like the game of Checkers where each piece can only move forward into danger with little chance at surviving against one’s opponent. As a far simpler game of strategy there are far fewer possible choices. Fatalism, might be seen as, less in control as the limit of moves approaches zero. The loser is the one whose checkers are all removed.

When God made “chess” He first thought about the middle knowledge and the counterfactuals (the variety of possible moves) that one could providentially make. Providence might be seen as the number of remaining moves as the game proceeds. For the player, his/her choices, which they make and for which they are responsible [1 Corinthians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:17] become more focused or directional in purpose or designed play. The game does not end with the removal of all pieces but with the defeat of an opposing king [Revelation 14:10; 21:27].

From Bohu to Adam

To understand how 15 billion years in geological time as measured in space could actually equal 6 earth days for the creation of the universe, we must understand how the radiation energy in space was stretched or dilated at the beginning and then as the temperature in space cooled radiation energy would be measured at a lower frequency.

Mu-meson, Time Dilation, & Relativity

Here is a test that proved Einstein right: $E=MC^2$. The Mu-meson is an elementary particle that has a half period of 1.5 μs [microseconds or millionths of a second]. They are produced in the earth's atmosphere when cosmic rays from the sun slam into atmospheric gases. Mu-mesons travel near the speed of light. They require 200 μs traveling time to reach the Earth. With a 1.5 μs half period 200 μs should use up 133 half periods. $200/1.5 = 133.333\dots$ This is a number so small that almost no mu-meson should ever reach the Earth's surface. [See Schroeder, *Genesis and the Big Bang*, 44-45].

Physicist have discovered, however, that the mu-mesons reach Earth with one eighth of a particle's half life spent or $1/2^3$ which means 3 instead of 133 half periods have elapsed [3 times 1.5 μs is 4.5 μs and not 200 μs]. So they traveled the 60 kilometer distance to Earth in only 4.5 μs and not 200 μs that scientists expected from their vantage point on Earth. [60 km at the speed of light takes 200 μs to complete: The Speed of Light or 'C' in $E=MC^2$ is 299,338 km per 1,000,000 μs [per second] times 200 μs or 59.87 (60) km to Earth]. From the Cosmos [space] it did not take 200 μs but only 4.5 μs . Both are correct! Time was dilated [stretched] near the speed of light—as it was on the 6 days of

From Bohu to Adam

Creation week. If you were on earth with a stopwatch and I was “riding” a mu-meson with my stopwatch, yours would read 200 micro seconds when I reached you but mine would read only four and a half millionths of a second. Time was stretched as I rode the particle -yahoo!

From the Earth someone with a time piece would calculate 6 days for the creation of the universe; but, since there was no earth, we calculate time from out in space at the time it was happening, 15 billion years. Here’s how:

How long did it take for God to create the universe?

Bohu is Hebrew for “void” in Genesis 1:2. We are talking 6 days from Bohu to the creation of Adam. During this time the energy produced during the “Big Bang” is converted to matter: $E=MC^2$. Time is a function of matter not energy. Time is a measurement of how long it takes to form matter. So time begins at Genesis 1:2 at Bohu, KJV “void” or “In the Beginning” (of time) Genesis 1:1.

Since biblical time takes hold with the appearance of matter, the biblical clock starts at בְּהוּ [Bohu] (KJV “void”), that instant just after the big bang when stable matter as we know it formed from energy in 0.00001 second. The age of all matter in the universe dates back to Bohu, the moment all matter was formed. No more matter was formed after this time [John 1:3].

“We know the temperature and hence the frequency of radiation energy in the universe at this time [at Bohu]. It is not a value ... extrapolated .. or ... estimated. It is measured and corresponds to a temperature approximately 1 million million times [10^{12}] hotter than the current 3°Kelvin [in the] black of space.” [Schroeder, *The Science of God*, 57].

CBR or *Cosmic Background Radiation* at quark confinement [or Genesis 1:2 “void”] was at a wavelength of 10^{12} [CBR NOW IS 10^3]. At the moment matter was being formed the frequency of radiation was being stretched from 10^3 to 10^{12} as the universe expanded at the speed of light.

From Bohu to Adam

Time must be measured from a universal framework not the earth but the entire universe. And this perspective is only available in the CBR, in this radiation in space.

At Creation, at Bohu, 10^{12} wavelength or a million million “stretches the cosmic perception of time by a million million” [Schroeder, *The Science of God*, 57]. When we divide this perceived geological age of the universe of 15 billions years, 1.5×10^{10} [geological reckoning according to science] by 10^{12} or the wavelength of the CBR [$1.5 \times 10^{10} / 1 \times 10^{12}$] we get 1.5×10^{-2} or .015 years or $365 \times .015 = 5.475$ [6] days. “When one asks if six days or 15 billion years passed before the appearance of humankind, the correct answer is ‘yes’” [Schroeder, *The Science of God*, 58].

Bibliography

- Alford, Henry. *The Greek Testament*. Chicago, IL. Moody Press. 1958.
- Alexandria, Athanasius of. *On the Incarnation: Treatise on the Embodiment of the Word of God* e-artnow. Kindle Edition.
- Barclay, John M. G. *Paul & the Power of Grace*. Grand Rapids MI. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2020.
- Baker, Sharon . *Executing God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2013.
- Beilby, James K. & Paul R Eddy. *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*. Madison, WI. Inter Varsity Press, 2001.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. NY: Touchstone Books. 1959.
- Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, et. al. Editors. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974 15 vols.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Isaiah 40-66*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press. 1989
- Brown, Colin. ed. al. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 1986 4 Vols..
- Brown, Driver, & Briggs. [BDB] *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. [The BDB].. Peabody, MA. Hendrickson Publishers. Sixteenth Printing 2015
- Caragounis, Chrys C. *The Development of Greek and The New Testament: Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2006
- Craig, William Lane. *Atonement and the Death of Christ: An Exegetical, Historical, and Philosophical Exploration*. Waco, TX. Baylor University Press. 2020
- Donovan, Bishop Vincent. *Christianity Rediscovered*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.
- Godet, Frederick Louis. *Commentary of the Gospel of John*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 1970
- _____. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 1971
- _____. *The First Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 1970

Bibliography

- Gesenius, William A *Hebrew And English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1882
- Girdlestone, Robert B. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids , MI: Grand Rapids Book Manufacturers, Inc. 1974
- Harrison, R. K. *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004
- Hitchens, Peter. *The Rage Against God: How Atheism Led Me to Faith* (p. 74). HarperCollins Christian Publishing. Kindle Edition.
- E. Kautzsch. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. London, UK:Oxford University Press, reprinted 1974
- Keil-Delitzsch *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans Publishing, 1980
- Kittel, Gerhard. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974.
- Lange, John Peter. *Commentary of the Holy Scriptures*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1980.
- Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. compl. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976
- Lightfoot, J. B. *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1974
- _____*The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1974.
- _____*Saint Paul's Epistles to the Philippians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 15th printing. 1976
- Metzger, Bruce. *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*. London-New York: United Bible Societies. 3rd edition. 1975
- Moulton, James Hope & George Milligan. *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974
- Pearlman, Myer. *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House; Revised edition, 2012
- Richards, Randolph E. & Richard James. *Misreading Scripture With Individualist Eyes: Patronage, Honor and Shame in the Biblical World*. Downers Grove, IL:InterVarsity Press. 2020
- Robertson, A.T. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934
- Schroeder, Gerald L. *Genesis and the Big Bang*. NY: Bantam Books. 1990.
- _____*The Science of God*. NY: The Free Press. 1997.
- Spurgeon, C. H. *The Treasury of David*. London. UK.: Passmore & Alabaster, Reprint 1984.
- Stott, John. *The Cross of Christ Centennial Edition*. Downers Grove, IL:InterVarsity Press. 2021

Bibliography

- Swete, Henry Barclay. *The Gospel According to St Mark*. London England: Macmillan and Co. 1898
- Thayers, Joseph. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*. Hendrickson Publishers, 1996
- Trench, Richard C. *Synonyms of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975
- _____. *On the Study of the Words Lectures*. New York: W.. Widdleton, publisher. Unknown
- _____. *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*. New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company. Unknown
- Tozer, A. W. *The Knowledge of the Holy*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing, 1961
- Vidu, Adonis. *Atonement, Law, and Justice*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2014
- Wright, N. T. *Paul*. Minneapolis, MN.: First Fortress Press, 2005