

Theory #3

Love Lost, Love Regained, or *How did the Devil get into God's Illustration?*

Many believe **Satan** to be no more than a cardboard character conjured up by those who want to offload, onto a convenient scapegoat, all of their guilt and personal responsibility. "The devil made me do it!"

The devil is always at-the-ready, an easy target. But who is this entity? Is he real? Is he formidable? Is he evil? And how, if God is all-powerful, did he get into God's perfect Garden anyway? How can a "perfect" Garden host such a diabolical presence and still represent a perfect heaven where God dwells?¹ (Satan appeared there *before* the Fall of Adam, and before the curse, when things were still in their pristine state.)

And some would ask, understandably, "What kind of all-powerful God allows His arch enemy into His chambers, *and why would He*, knowing the damage he's going to do and how he's going to potentially thwart the outcome of the all-important plan?" Chapter 3 of Genesis, despite its paucity of detail, gives us a sneak preview, a mini-lesson in the rudiments of Satan's wiles. Embedded in this short description is a wealth of implication we want to mine for all it's worth. This next theory gives us an inside look at the machinations of the evil realm, but more importantly, how God uses them for His own glorious purposes.

LOVE LOST, LOVE REGAINED

If the story of Adam and Eve is a picture of God's situation, including His "problem," it is also, as we said earlier, a picture of His solution. Eve, in particular, represents human kind (her name means the "mother of all the living"), the class of creature that God created to yield His anticipated eternal companion—a companion who is like *Him* in the same way that He is like us. How are we humans like God? By embodying many of His attributes and capacities. We have self-awareness, a superior mind, a free will, a conscience, an eternal spirit,² emotions that can be touched by others, a unique personality, talents, creativity, aspirations or goals, and heartfelt desires. Chief among these God-like attributes would be the ability to love, a trait that God Himself exemplifies perfectly. A companion without this capacity would hardly be like Him at all. So God built that into our nature, with the intent and hope that that love would ultimately be aimed in His direction.

¹ Interestingly, we see in Job 1:6 that Satan entered heaven after his own fall and apparently still has access as the accuser of the brethren. If heaven is represented by the Garden, then Satan's appearance there is not at odds with this heavenly reality.

² Subject to either eternal life or eternal death.

Scripture portrays this incident involving **Satan** in the garden as an interaction with a serpent, a snake who could talk! This is clearly one reason why so many people think this story is fiction. Animals don't talk! And yet interestingly, Eve appears to register no surprise that *this* animal is talking to her. How can we reconcile this with our knowledge of the present physical world?

One bit of information we can gather from Scripture is that demons prefer to have a body to operate through. (You can read about this in Matthew 8:28-34 and Matthew 12:43-45.) They do not want to be "homeless." They will inhabit animals or people, whatever is available or opens the door to them or to which they can gain access. In this case it appears that said serpent was an actual beast, "the cleverest of the beasts of the field" in God's estimation. And Satan took possession of its body because perhaps it was naturally capable of speech. Perhaps the mimicry of parrots is a divine hint that such was once possible. This would explain the fact that Eve is not shocked by this development, and responds quite matter-of-factly to his inquiry.

But there may be another reason Satan chose to inhabit and speak through a creature. Being a higher-level angel (not a mere demon), Satan has the capacity to manifest in whatever form he chooses; but in this case he didn't do so. He actually entered an animal and used its body. Why? Why didn't he just appear as an "angel of light" or in his true form, as a hideous, fallen, malevolent principality?

One, if Satan had appeared as an angel of light, the temptation would have been too difficult for the naïve Adam to discern. Which one do I believe? They're both beautiful; appear to be truthful; and both seem kind and good. On the other hand, if Satan had appeared as a malevolent demon, there would have been no question whom to believe and Adam's choice would not have revealed the truth of his heart's condition.

No, the choice had to be believable enough to be appealing, but not so convincing as to remove all culpability from Adam for his choice. So it is possible that God did not allow Satan either of these options. Thus the choice to inhabit another creature.

On the other hand, Satan may have had another reason for his choice. It is probable that Satan had at one time ruled the earth, before his fall. Scripture refers to him as the "star of the morning, son of the dawn!" But since he transgressed against God, the earth had been cursed and covered in water (or more likely ice – see Gen. 1), until such time as God decided to create again. Adam, when he was created, had been given dominion over the world; a world that Satan coveted. He wanted that dominion back. But he was out of the loop. He was not part of the hierarchy of dominion anymore. How could he wrest control of this world away from man by legal means that God would be bound to honor?

I think it can be argued that, in order to regain legal control of this rehabilitated world, Satan knew that he had to get back "into the picture," and get Adam to submit to him "from within the hierarchy itself." By inhabiting one of earth's creatures, in fact its highest creature next to Adam and Eve, and getting Adam to "come under" the power of that creature's suggestion, Satan gained control of not just Adam and Eve, but of all of the creation over which they ruled. Scripture says we are "slaves of the one we obey." Adam's decision to "knuckle-under" to one of his own subjects (the serpent) made him that subject's slave. And since that subject in turn knuckled under Satan, allowing him to use his body for evil purposes, he (as the highest of the beasts of the field) brought the entire creation under Satan's authority as well. Fittingly, Satan is often pictured in Scripture as a dragon or serpent.

It is interesting to note that God held the serpent responsible for letting the devil use its body in this way. It was cursed right along with Adam and Eve. No more would it walk upright (or on legs of whatever kind), but would henceforth be forced to crawl on the ground and "eat dirt," as they say. There would also be a natural enmity between women and snakes forevermore. But this curse is also spoken to Satan, in that there would be particular enmity between him and women and between him and a particular offspring of a *particular* woman. This is interpreted as a prophetic reference to the coming Redeemer who would again engage this Serpent in battle.

However, since real love is voluntary, love without the freedom to choose it is a contradiction. It's coercion, and a perversion. No one can be "forced" to love. The term "love-slave" is an oxymoron. Nor is love without choices inherently meaningful or satisfying. If one were marooned on a desert isle with but one other person and no way of escape, getting together might be inevitable and might serve a purpose, but it would hardly amount to a testament of undying devotion for either party. "I chose you" would not carry much credibility. But introduce even one other choice into the mix and the decision gains significantly more meaning.

Therefore, if God wanted this relationship to have any meaning or depth, He had to offer this creature He fashioned a real and legitimate alternative choice—that is, another love-object—or else any "love" between them would be rather shallow, prescribed, and without options, much like that of an infant who is not aware of any love-object outside of its mother. Such infantile love is instinctive rather than volitional. No infant "decides" objectively to "love" his or her mother. He clings to her out of desperate need and primal programming.³

But God was after a love relationship that was mutual, mature, optional, sacrificial, volitional and durable. Not a fickle one, demanding its way or else withdrawing. God was looking for a companion who could answer this question in the affirmative: Will you continue to love Me and choose Me when presented with an equally attractive, though contrary, option?

In order to accomplish His intention then, God had to allow the man an additional and truly competitive suitor. One who would test the man's heart, his love and his loyalty; but only after he was adequately acquainted with God and *His* attributes, qualifications and desirability. God gave the man time to get to

³ Of course one could argue that romantic human love is hardly objective or volitional, even for adults; that we humans are often at the mercy of forces beyond our understanding or ability to control. But we are not talking strictly about *eros* love here, the kind of connection most defined by chemistry in human relationships. We are talking about something much deeper and more multi-faceted than simple attraction or physical passion. We are talking about the *decision* to love another and to sacrifice self if necessary to carry out that commitment.

know Him, to appreciate Him. The challenger would not appear immediately.⁴ Otherwise any rejection of God would lack real substance, thus hardly be culpable.

But who would perform this function? Who would that interloper be? Once again, God in His foreknowledge anticipated this vacancy.

Thus, before ever creating man, He had first created the angelic host, knowing full well that some of them would rebel, thereby supplying the fodder for this choice: the flip side of the decision—the alternative to loving God.⁵ Lucifer, the angel of light, fulfills the role of another suitor. He gives God a run for His money. The highest of God's created order, the most beautiful, the most light-filled, he held the post of second-in-command in God's heaven. But over time he succumbed to pride and selfish ambition, leading him to inspire a mutiny among the heavenly hosts, a rebellion for which he and his cohort were cast out of heaven. Ever after, his anger and hatred have driven him to compete with God, first for the hand of Adam and Eve in the garden, and ultimately for each individual God has made, one by one. He entices, woos, and presumably wins many of God's creatures in this cosmic quest for a bride.

There are only two choices for each of us, God-love or ultimately Self-love, as illustrated and encouraged by the example of the lying suitor, Lucifer/Satan, which, incidentally, means "adversary." Lucifer is the archetype of self-serving self-exaltation. The Bible calls it pride. "I will sit in the place of the Most High."⁶

⁴ Since 40 is the number of testing in the Bible, we suspect that God gave Adam a multiple of 40 years to spend with Him before the temptation was permitted. Perhaps 40 years, perhaps 400 years? See Appendix E for a discussion of this subject in more detail.

⁵ Why does God create beings that He knows will rebel? Doesn't that seem counterproductive at best and diabolical at worst? The fact is, God isn't up there creating individuals and sending them into the wombs of women. The current program is called "procreation" and men who engage in it, in a sense "create" their own offspring. It is highly unlikely that God is up in heaven choosing to give children to some fornicators and not others, or choosing to give kids He knows will be ever-unregenerate to godly parents. It is not the spirit that chooses God, but the will and the heart, and God does not control either of those when it comes to choosing Him. He respects our rights, the rights of all His creatures, to choose for themselves whom they will serve and whom they will love. He does not program our choices. He is not into robots. But He also holds each one responsible for those choices and gives them ample warning of the consequences, if they choose to heed it.

⁶ See Isaiah 14:13,14 for a description of Satan's heart.

When Scripture says then that we must “die to ourselves,” that is, to self-love or self-idolatry, or, said another way, we must “crucify the flesh,” it means we must voluntarily kill this inborn desire (since the Fall) to serve our appetites above all else and to exalt the self above God as Lucifer did. Whom will you serve? What will you live for? To eat, drink, and fulfill your desires? To exalt yourself? Or are you willing to live to God, and make His desires your desires and His goals your goals? This is the ultimate question. A question every human must and will answer.

IN THE BEGINNING

It seems likely that God first created the physical earth “in the beginning” as a habitation for the angelic host. As Isaiah 45:18 says, He did not create it barren and void. He created it to be inhabited. And yet, Genesis 1:2 says it was barren and void. What happened? Is it possible that He cursed the earth once before and covered it with water, after a third of the angels⁷ rebelled? Are we looking at a judged planet in the opening verses of Genesis 1? (The globe was covered in water, or more likely ice since there was no sun, as God began His work.⁸) Scripture seems to equate “the sea” with demons and with sin: the Antichrist comes up “out of the sea” (which is also a figure for the Gentile nations); our sins will be cast into the deepest sea; Noah’s flood (a worldwide “sea”) was to punish demonically inspired sin and corruption (see Genesis 6); the new heavens and new earth will “no longer have any sea,” because sin will be vanquished. Perhaps this is why the earth was covered in water in the beginning, because of a prior judgment. Was this how God destroyed His original earth and made the sea like a cloak that covers the habitation of the demons who rebelled?⁹

⁷ Rev. 12:4

⁸ Some think that this was actually a frozen sea, since there was apparently no sun to warm it in the opening verses of Genesis. But that the Holy Spirit was “brooding” over the frozen sea and actually incubating it, much like a mother hen warms her egg. Then God “separated the waters from the waters,” in effect creating an upper atmosphere in the form of a crystalline canopy around the earth with the lower atmosphere sandwiched in between. This canopy would have operated as a translucent filter, diffusing sunlight and harmful UV rays, and causing a semi-tropical terrarium-like effect around the globe (explaining the discovery of gigantic tropical ferns in ice cores in northern climes). This separation of waters would have caused some of the earth’s land surface to be exposed, and the dry land would have appeared. Later, as God flooded the earth (Gen. 6-8), “the windows of the heavens were opened” and this canopy dissolved and rained down, again covering the earth in water for the duration of the flood, along with water from subterranean chambers. The concurrent tectonic upheaval (when the fountains of the great deep broke open, volcanoes erupted, etc.) would have raised up high mountains and lowered the ocean trenches, eventually allowing the excess water from the collapsed canopy to flow back into subterranean vaults toward the end of the flood.

⁹ For those who balk at the young earth theory, this may be a way to reconcile evidence for an older earth with evidence for a more recent development of humankind.

Perhaps Genesis 1 is the story of His *renewing* the earth for the habitation of man, the ultimate object of His creative plan. For example, we see in Genesis 1 that the earth itself was already present and its creation is not part of the Genesis-week activity. If this is the case, Genesis 1-3 takes on a little richer flavor. Rather than being the beginning of *all* things, it is an illustration, a record, of how God refurbished the earth and set about His plan to create a Bride for Himself. (This theory is one way to explain evidence that implies that the earth is very old, without disrupting a literal understanding of Genesis or the essential message of salvation: that death came through sin.¹⁰) Lucifer's rebellion is incorporated into the plan. As always, "God works all things together for good to those who love Him." (Romans 8:28) He cannot be outdone.

SUMMARY

Could we be correct then in asserting that Adam is a figure for God himself,¹¹ and that the events of the creation week depict for us, in microcosm, in a very truncated fashion, the whole majestic plan of God to secure a companion for Himself? Perhaps this is why the Bible seems always to speak from a male perspective. If it is the story, often in metaphor, of God's quest for a "Bride," it only makes sense that it would be written from that perspective. Any attempt to feminize it, then, is to pervert and cloud its most basic underlying message. God wants a wife, an intimate, fraternal and eternal communion with one like Himself.¹²

So, in summary, here is Adam (a picture of God), languishing in a beautiful garden (heaven), with all sorts of other creatures surrounding him (representing the angels and principalities), and yet none like

¹⁰ Scripture teaches that death entered the world as a result of Adam's decision to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "...through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned..." Romans 5:12. Note that it says death passed to all *men*. One could surmise that bacteria, mosquitoes, and others of the animal kingdom were not immortal before the Fall, for two reasons. 1) They did not eat from the Tree of Life as man did, and 2) they would have quickly overrun and imbalanced the ecosystem unless they had many fewer offspring than they do now.

¹¹ The Bible speaks of "The Word" of God as having been *with* God in the beginning and also being God. (John 1:1) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We see this "Word" as the "manifest God." God is Spirit and cannot be seen. He dwells in unapproachable light. Therefore, in order to interact with physical beings or embodied (or disembodied) spirits, God needed to express Himself in some kind of visible form. This "form" is called "the Word" of God. It is the "Word" who became flesh at the incarnation of Jesus and who will be wed to the Church, His Bride. Thus Adam may be more precisely an illustration of the Word. But since the Word *is* God, we are simply saying Adam illustrates God.

¹² It would be wise to refrain from taking this too literally, as if God wants His own harem in heaven. His lovers are those who worship the highest Good, choosing Him above all other options and who walk that choice out in their daily lives. See Matt. 7.

himself? None a suitable companion. So God puts him to sleep and creates a bride from his own body.

Could it be that God created Eve from Adam's rib to symbolize the fact that *His* companion, His Bride (comprising both men and women followers), would be called His Body, and would be one with Him; and that she, in some sense, is made of the same stuff of which He is made; and indeed, would be said to be "in Him" and He in her? Could it be that Adam's deep sleep (when God took one of his "ribs") symbolizes Christ's "sleep" in the grave and giving of His own body before birthing the Church at Pentecost? Could it be that Eve is called a helper, "meet" (designed perfectly) for Adam, because that is what the Church will be for Christ, ruling and reigning with Him for all eternity: the perfect companion, suited to Him in every way; never leading or dominating Him, yet sharing His dominion, respecting Him, and being perfectly loved and lavished with all the King's possessions and grace and divine prerogatives? And could it be that Satan aims his temptation first at Eve because she represents humankind¹³ in this illustration? He wants to lure us away, an illustration of the freedom God gives all of us to choose another love, even if foolishly. She thus prefigures humanity's pride, ambition, folly, and naiveté as she succumbs to the deception of Satan, rejects her Maker, rejects submission, and then must endure the terrible consequences of her sin. Ultimately she has the opportunity to choose repentance, redemption and resubmission to God. But only after she is purified and refined will she be an adequate lover for the King; someone who loves Him for who He is, not just for what He does.

It's as if two things were happening in this garden scenario.

On one level, God was actually putting into action His plan to create a being who would ultimately become His eternal companion, with all its attendant implications: a human-like God wedded to a god-like human. How innovative. How clever.¹⁴

¹³ In all its foolish, naïve and arrogant frailty as most of us are in our native state.

¹⁴ Without violating the uniqueness of Godhood, He still achieves His ultimate objective: intimate fellowship with one who is like Him.

Adam, the consummate human specimen, is charged with the task of walking out God's one command; a test, a trial-run if you will. He was our best hope for success, but he chose to rebel in a most ignominious fashion—at the behest of his wife. As the “federal head”¹⁵ and progenitor of the human race, his failure became our failure by proxy and we crossed over into the enemy's camp, to be held captive to do his will.¹⁶ And thus all our children are born in the enemy's camp as well,¹⁷ spiritually penniless paupers unable to purchase their own freedom, cursed to an eternity of slavery, misery and death. Only if a benefactor from outside the camp can buy the slaves back from servitude. But since all of Adam's sons are born in the slave camp, there *is* no one outside to perform this rescue. Thus our hopeless condition.

But God, being rich in mercy, decided to enter this earthly realm and become that lone benefactor. The curse, with all its horrors, was to be outshone by one thing and one thing only: God's triumphant **redemption** of His creation. As the Second Adam, unfallen and born outside the slave camp (i.e., without a fallen human father), Jesus qualified by his perfect obedience as the human Kinsman Redeemer. His own life was the price Satan demanded for release of his possessions, thinking once Jesus was slain, that would be the end of Him. But God had another plan and conquered death besides, displaying for the fallen angels His perfect justice, perfect love¹⁸ and almighty power simultaneously, standing as mute yet glorious testimony throughout eternity of His supreme and rightful Lordship for all to see. Never again will it be questioned who He is or whether He has the right

¹⁵ Another way of saying “legal ruler” over the earth.

¹⁶ The Scriptures tell us “we are slaves of the one we obey.” (Romans 6:16) When Adam obeyed Satan's suggestion to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (whether this is literal or symbolic), he became Satan's slave and forfeited his dominion over the earth. He and all that he possessed (or controlled) came under the headship of Satan. Adam crossed over from God's camp to Satan's camp, and thus all his offspring are born in Satan's camp as well. (Slave masters own not just their slaves, but all the slaves' children.) How do we get out of Satan's camp? We have to be purchased, like all slaves. And we are purchased by the blood of Christ.

¹⁷ Is this fair? Yes. Given that Adam was our best shot, that he was commissioned to represent the human race and had dominion over all the earth, *and* given that the test was actually passable, his failure represented our own predictable failure. Only we would have failed even sooner. Though pride might lead us to think we would have done better, we are only fooling ourselves. God is fair and eminently just. Adam represented us and we are reaping his failure. By the same token, Jesus represented us on the cross and we can reap His success and resurrection, if we so choose. It's even-steven. “As through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin...so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men...For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:12a, 18b, 19)

¹⁸ God accomplished two things at the redemption: 1) He punished sin as any good and righteous Judge would; and at the very same time, 2) He demonstrated mercy toward His creation; mercy that did not sacrifice justice, since man's sin was paid for by His own sacrificial death on our behalf. Which is love personified.

to rule. His perfection will be unimpeachable. No wonder the angels sang at His birth, “Hosanna in the Highest!”

At the same time, on another level, God is depicting for us a grand and graphic portrayal of His own inscrutable predicament: He is a one-member species. No way to reproduce; no chance of perfect intimacy with one who is “like” Him in every way.

Adam and Eve, then, were the actors in that divine drama, with Adam playing the part of God and Eve as his same-flesh bride, representing the Church.

But here the parallelism ends. Once Satan enters the garden, the illustration portion ends and the plan to create an incorruptible species begins in earnest; a plan to transform man from an innocent but untested creature who naively chooses foolishness and rebellion, into one who is made like God¹⁹ in and through the painfully arduous sanctification process; a creature who is tested, purified and refined, and who ultimately *becomes* wise, yielded, holy (in his own right²⁰), and no longer responsive to temptation.

God knew that it was not enough just to have our love in a beautiful garden where there was no competition for our hearts. In order to get a Bride who would not rebel later, would not choose to love

¹⁹ If he chooses to cooperate...

²⁰ It is true that I cannot pay for my sins myself, and that they are paid for by the all-sufficient work of Jesus Christ on the cross. That is a legal transaction effected by grace through faith (God’s grace, my acceptance by faith and repentance) that makes me holy. But this imputed holiness alone (the kind that comes with receiving Christ’s righteousness legally by faith), as wonderful and essential as that is, will not carry us through an eternity of challenges and the temptation to exalt ourselves above God, as Satan did, unless we lose our free will at salvation, and we surely don’t. This imputed holiness must be confirmed in the fire of affliction. Sanctification must proceed. As the Scripture says: “Be ye holy, as I am holy.” (Lev. 19:2) This is spoken to God’s people Israel, who already knew Him as God. In that sense they already had faith. So His command is not a command to believe and *receive* holiness, but to be set apart, to obey His commands, to “be” holy. Much of the church holds to a doctrine that borders on magic: I say the magic words and I am instantly righteous, holy and sanctified. That is true positionally, as to our standing. But not as to our state. Were that the case, what need would there be for any longer life here once we are converted in faith? Why not take us home immediately? Because God is preparing a co-ruler, an entire race of co-rulers, and we have to learn our trade: to deal appropriately with our own sin (confession, repentance) as well as how to resist and dominate the enemy using God’s imputed authority. We have to learn to manage God’s assets as a wise steward and not let His house be broken into. True, one who dies immediately after salvation goes to heaven, and the Bema Seat judgment will burn away their dross as it will ours. And yet those of us who endure much life and much testing are being prepared for something; some service, some calling. And we dare not take our sanctification lightly. As Paul said: “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess.5:23) As if to say, they could be preserved incomplete? But for our sakes, Jesus takes the reins in our sanctification protocol. “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” (1Thess.5:24) Not by making us robots, but by putting us through sufficient trials and testing to break us as a horse trainer breaks a wild stallion, and then remolding us in His own righteous image.

another later, He had to create a situation in which she would choose Him from a place of fallenness—where there was internal resistance to the good and lust for the bad.²¹ Those who overcame the pull of evil (both internally and externally) under the worst of circumstances could be counted on to resist it when it was fully conquered as well, in eternity.²²

Interesting concept. If this is true, then *all of human history* is designed to ultimately yield this perfect companion for God Himself. Free will is God's winnowing fork. It is the tool He uses to separate the wheat from the chaff. "This day I set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life, that you may live..." (Deut.30:19) Obedience is the path to life. Rebellion is the path to eternal death (separation from God).

God's edict requiring Adam and Eve to resist the enticing fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" or else experience death (the ultimate evil and the automatic byproduct of separation from God), was the threshing floor of this choice. Would they believe God and trust His intentions, or would they doubt Him and lust at the chance to exercise independence from their Creator? Adam and Eve had no experience with evil. They were innocent, but not virtuous. Virtue results when innocence is tested and triumphs. So when presented with that very choice in the garden, they ultimately rejected God as Enough, and chose another love: that is, Self: self-rule, self-love, self-actualization. To be in control. To manage their own lives. To decide for themselves what was right and what was wrong. To be as gods!²³

²¹ God knows the future, but He does not control our individual decisions. The human will is sacred ground and God honors it (at least whenever there is moral content involved). But God also knew that the innocence and naiveté of Adam and Eve would eventually be their undoing. Was this stacking the deck against them, to create them this way, innocent of evil? No, for two reasons. 1) It was the only way to reveal their true heart's desire. If God had enlightened them about evil and its full consequences, they would have chosen to obey out of self-love and self-preservation rather than love of God. God is looking for a companion who will love Him from a heart of devotion and appreciation and admiration, even if it costs dearly, rather than a heart of veiled self-interest. And 2), in order to enlighten them to evil and give them actual experience in this realm, God would have had to either manipulate Satan or actually *create* some evil through which to teach them, and He wants no part of either. He simply left the door ajar at a certain point, and Satan came in as it suited him. (God did not create Satan as evil. That was Satan's doing.)

²² Even though our carnal nature (our fleshly appetites) will not accompany us to heaven, our hearts as well must be fully converted to enter His courts. He will not endure another rebellion. He'll have no lukewarm Bride.

²³ This, of course, was Satan's challenge in the Garden. Did they want to remain under God's thumb forever, or did they want to be gods themselves? The temptation, a lie cloaked in a truth, was persuasive. "You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it *your eyes will be opened*, and you will be like God, *knowing good and evil.*" (Gen.3:5) It was true that their eyes would be opened and they would know good and evil, but it was a lie that they would not surely die. "You can get away with it, and there'll be no consequences!" Isn't that always the core in the apple of temptation?

This decision to rebel yielded the fruit of these words: "...for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die" (or become mortal). (Gen. 2:17) Adam became a mortal being that very day (immortality being a function of being united to God ²⁴). He lost eternal life²⁵ and his body began to age, the long process of deterioration that leads to death.

And we're all tracing their footsteps. We are all born with this same tendency to satisfy self. To love self above God. To control our own little universe. To be our own gods. We want to be in charge! And that desire inevitably leads to our own little Garden of Eden experience where we reject God's best and choose to follow the fallen one.

And yet, despite Adam's foolishness and ours, all is not lost. God anticipated this, too, and wove it into His plan. He would rectify this tragic situation by coming to earth Himself, as one of His own creatures. The Word (God-manifest) forever took on flesh and lived a perfect life on this earth as the Second Adam²⁶ in a bold attempt to redeem His creation. Though challenged by the same temptations we are, He stood His ground uncorrupted. Then died an excruciating, substitutionary death in payment for sins He never committed Himself, satisfying the Father's righteous justice in requiring death for sin, and in the process rescuing His intended,²⁷ thus undoing the terrible curse for those creatures who will choose to receive Him when given the option. He became a curse for us. As the Scripture says, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree."

Every man who lives to the age of accountability²⁸ is confronted with this choice in his lifetime: Whom will you serve? Whom will you love? The true God, or Self in the shape of a god of your own design (i.e., money, success, career, fame, power, sex, food, mother earth, Allah, or any number of other

²⁴ 1 Timothy 6:13a, 16: "I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things...who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen nor can see." Though Adam's life didn't cease that very day, he became mortal that very day, and this is what God meant when He said: "In the day that you from it, you shall surely die." In other words, you shall be cut off from the source of your eternal life that day and become a mortal being. And since mortal cannot give rise to immortal, all of Adam's offspring are, of necessity, mortal as well.

²⁵ Eternal life is not an object or benefit conferred upon belief in God, but is a function of your relationship with God. Abandon the relationship and eternal life is lost.

²⁶ See 1 Corinthians 15:45-47 and Theory #5

²⁷ His intended being the Bride, the company of all who put their faith in Jesus.

²⁸ The age of accountability is primarily a Jewish concept born of their experience with God. Traditionally, Jewish boys become "sons of the law" (Bar Mitzvah) or individually responsible for their choices at age 13 and are believed to be accountable to God from that point forward. Ultimately, God determines what this age is for each of us.

substitutes)? I believe God enlightens every man at some point as to His existence.²⁹ It is up to us whether we reach up and turn out the light or whether we move forward into it. As we do, God reveals more and more of His truth. And ultimately He leads us into an increasingly perfect relationship with Himself. If you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him, for He is not far from any man.³⁰ (Acts 17:27)

So if Adam sinned as a result of being tempted by Satan, and if his failure to resist that temptation resulted in the curse, the entrance of death, and the loss of dominion over the earth, and if that curse

²⁹ John 1:9 tells us: "There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." Paul also speaks to this in the book of Romans 1:18-22, 25: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools...For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever."

³⁰ Some may ask: Have all heard? Surely **some have never heard** about God's plan of redemption and thus could not have received it by faith even if they wanted to. Either they were born in far-off lands to which the "good news" was long in coming, or they were raised in societies that had only perverted notions of God's plan embodied in myths and legends. Others died long before reaching an age or mental capacity to understand such things. And millions came and went long before Christ ever appeared.

Yes, it appears that this is the case, for many *did* die before this plan was understood, even by the apostles, as well as before redemption was effected. Many never heard about the Bible or the God of the Bible and died without knowing the hope we have in Christ. What about them?

It appears from Scripture that God has made provision for those who, without having heard about or understood the plan of salvation, could still benefit from it. Many *have* responded to the light God has given them, whether that light was the light of creation itself and its magnificence, or the light of their own conscience (the internal witness that all men have about God). If they tried to live a life that was consistent with their own conscience and the knowledge they had ("Whatever is not from faith is sin." Romans 14:23b), it appears that God has granted them eternal life.

Romans 2:5-11 says: "God...will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil..., but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good...For there is no partiality with God." Those who lived a life of wanton pleasure and flaunted the dictates of their own conscience, let alone God's law, will find themselves suffering the consequences of their deeds eternally. Those who did not reject God by lawless disobedience to known principles have great hope of being granted mercy in the judgment.

Whether they will be part of the Bride remains to be seen, but some have suggested that they will, perhaps, be part of another group called the "friends of the Bridegroom." (See John 3:29) These will feast together with the Bride and Bridegroom and will spend eternity with them in God's Kingdom. However, once a person hears the true message of the gospel, it is incumbent upon them to accept it. It would be foolhardy to rebuff Christ (which is consistent with rejecting a marriage proposal) and plan on making it to heaven (God's home) on one's own merits or as a friend of the Bridegroom. Anyone who hears the Gospel and rejects it will be judged on their own deeds (including sins, thoughts, words, attitudes, unforgiveness, etc.) and will pay for them according to the dictates of the perfect Judge.

We've all heard it said: There are many paths to God. And in one sense that's true. We will all meet Him one day. Question is: will we meet Him as our Savior or as our Judge?

placed the earth under Satan's authority as Scripture indicates,³¹ by what justification could God rightly redeem His creation, in effect undoing the Fall? Didn't Satan already win the contest fair and square? Enter Theory #4.

Q: Why was **redemption** necessary? Couldn't God just forgive Adam and forget it, let bygones be bygones? Or isn't He big enough for that?

A: If this is your heart, let me ask *you* a question. If someone raped and tortured your five year-old daughter to death and the judge told the perpetrator, "I forgive you. It's okay. I'm in a good mood today. Go on. Go home," what would you think of that kind of judge? What would it say about the value of your little girl? How would you feel? Like murdering the guy yourself, right? Would you call that justice, or wisdom, or fairness, or righteousness? No. But God is all those things and more and He will punish sin exactly as it deserves, in absolute righteousness. God decreed in the beginning that "the wages of sin is death." That is, the payment required when we rebel against God and goodness is death. The best thing we have, our life, pays for the worst thing, which is rebellion against the commander-in-chief of the universe. It's even-stein. But God, in His mercy, provided a means by which man could cover-over his sin temporarily until the "fullness of time" came when God Himself would come to earth to die as a substitute for man in full payment for man's sins. That temporary "covering" was animal sacrifice. God taught His people to offer a spotless lamb (or certain other species) to atone for their sin. But ultimately, only the death of a sinless human could completely satisfy the debt for human sin. Only a perfect human without blemish could die for the sins of others. Only an innocent person can pay another person's fine or serve their time. But since no human is perfect, God had to become one Himself in order to settle the sin question once and for all. Now it only remains for men to choose to bring their sin under the shed blood of Christ by faith in order to avail themselves of God's gracious provision. This is done by repentance and by surrender to the Lordship of Christ (obedience).

³¹ Satan is called "the god of this world" by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:3,4 when he says: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." And 1John 5:19 states: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." Even Jesus, when Satan offered to give Him all the kingdoms of the world, did not dispute Satan's right to make that offer. (See Matthew 4)