

The Satanic Rebellion: Background to the Tribulation

Part 1

Satan's Rebellion and Fall

(also available on-line at www.ichthys.com)

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Introduction to the Series: This five-part series serves as an essential introduction to the biblical study of eschatology (literally, “the study of last things”).¹ It is presented in the manner of strategic overview, that is to say, it takes at one sweep the rebellion of Satan and his angels against God, God's response in creating mankind, Satan's continuing counter-attack throughout human history, God's answer in Jesus Christ, Satan's final disposition, God's resolution of all related issues, and the final termination of human history.

I. Introduction to Part 1: Satan's Rebellion and Fall:

1) Before He Created the Universe, God Existed: Before Satan, before angels, before the creation of mankind, there was God. The triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) has always existed independent of man, angels, the universe, or even time itself.

The Word [Jesus Christ] existed at the very beginning, and there was reciprocity between the Word and God [the Father]. This One both existed and enjoyed reciprocity with God

¹ Part 2B of Essential Doctrines of the Bible: Eschatology: The Study of “Last Things” presents an overview on this topic.

from the very beginning. Everything came into being through Him, and without Him, nothing has come into being which has in fact come into being.

John 1:1-3

This fact is an extremely important one to keep in mind, because as believers in Jesus Christ, we need to remember that for all his terrible power, Satan is still only a *creature*, operating entirely within the universe of time and space which God has created, and is therefore entirely subject to God's sovereign will and omnipotence. By way of contrast, however, our infinite Lord is in no way whatsoever limited by or dependent upon this finite environment of time and space so essential to our existence and to that of all His creatures, Satan and the fallen angels included:²

God, who created the universe and everything in it, even He who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples our hands have made, nor is He ministered to by the hands of men (as if He needed anything from us) – [on the contrary], He is the One who gives life and breath and everything else to us all.

Acts 17:24-25

In terms of relative power, therefore, any conflict between our infinite, omnipotent Lord and Satan along with his coterie of angelic subordinates cannot even be termed a “contest” in any reasonable sense of that word. Should it please God to annihilate the devil and his minions, He possesses the power to do so in an instant without the slightest effort. That God has not done so says much about the awesome character of the God with whom we have to do. Satan is allowed to exist, allowed to rebel against the generous Lord who made him, and his rebellion is allowed to run its course, precisely because God loves us so much. For the supreme love that God the Father has for us as demonstrated in the sacrifice on our behalf of His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, can also be seen in His determination to let us, to let all His creatures, *choose* whether or not we wish to follow Him of our own free will. Although God loves all His creatures with a perfect love, He does not force any of them to love Him back. When history finally comes to an end, the only creatures, men and angels, who will be with Him forever are those who have chosen it.

In its simplest expression, creature history (angelic and human) is a chance for each of us to demonstrate conclusively whether we are with God or against Him, whether we want to accept and respond to His amazing love (and spend eternity with Him), or instead to reject His love (and spend eternity apart from Him). For us in the world today, that choice is made very simply in the decision to become followers of Jesus Christ through faith, or instead to reject the indescribable gift of His Son who died on our behalf. The angels, however, have already made their choices, and it is a measure of the genius of our Lord that it is by means of that very rebellion of His arch-creature Satan, that . . .

²For a more detailed look at the essence, nature and character of God, see Part 1 of Essential Doctrines of the Bible: Theology: the Study of God.

1) He validates our choice of Him (despite satanic opposition, we still chose Him, so that choice must be genuine),

2) He demonstrates His love for us (Satan's seduction of Adam brought us all under sin and thus necessitated the sacrifice of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, an act that is the very embodiment of His love),

3) He furthers His own glory in the process (allowing Satan's rebellion to run its course only serves to validate God's condemnation of the devil).

Had we not come through the fiery testing supplied by the devil and his corrupt world-system, we would never be able to appreciate God's marvelous provision for us and His deliverance of us from all our earthly trials (2Tim.4:18). Only by allowing us to experience His grace in the midst of the devil's world, can God bring us to the fullest understanding and appreciation of His love for us, while at the same time leading us to a full and genuine love for Him. Thanks be to God for His ineffable and unsearchable wisdom!

2) God's Creation of the Universe: Although He was under no obligation or necessity to do so, God did in fact create the universe we behold today. Before time, in an instant of time, He created time and space and all matter from nothing.³ He did so to provide us with a temporal and material environment in which we, his creatures, might exist. This then is the purpose of the present world and its creation: to give us and His angels a home and a habitation in which to exercise our free will. God is spiritual and infinite, and has no existential need of the finite universe. But He made all things – for us, for our benefit, that we might come to seek Him, to know Him, to choose to follow Him, and to love Him, for He first loved us (Acts 17:26-27; 1Jn.4:19). Much as we human beings desire to share our lives and our love and so bring children into the world, so our heavenly Father has prepared the heavens and the earth for us, His children, for our benefit – and for His glory. We are not toys, pets or automatons – we are His offspring (Acts 17:28). The fact that He sent His one and only Son to share flesh and blood as we do, so that He might die in our place, and that we might have eternal life is incontrovertible evidence that His creation of us and of all that we see, far from being an accident, flows instead directly from the matchless wisdom, purpose and love of our God and Father.

3) God's Creation of Angels: Since Christians today are constantly being bombarded by false information about angels through our popular culture, it will be helpful to take a moment to consider the biblical perspective. Overall, angels are not particularly prominent in the Bible. Mention of them does not even occur at all in about half of the books of the Bible, and a little reflection (or investigation) will show that they are seldom the focus of events in any biblical narrative. There is a very good reason for this. God has given the Bible to mankind as the standard of faith and practice here in the world; that is to say, scripture explains how God is dealing with *us*, and only tangentially examines His dealing with angelic kind. This point is important, because it is no secret that excessive fascination with angels and their activities

³This *ex nihilo* creation, as it is conventionally termed, is discussed in detail in part 2 of this series, The Genesis Gap.

(especially that which runs far beyond the legitimate information contained in the Bible) has been and continues to be a major stumbling block to believers and unbelievers both, drawing their attention away from the saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (about whom there is so much to learn) and from the other doctrines of scripture to a world of fancy instead (i.e., mis-information about angels and their activities). All this is not to say that some knowledge about the angelic realm is not important and necessary, but the Bible approaches the subject of angels very much on a “need to know” basis: it does not tell us all we would necessarily like to know, but it does tell us all we should know to understand God’s plan for the world and for us.⁴ The actions, functions and organization of angels, elect and fallen, are treated in part 4 of this series, but it will be of use here to outline some of the basic principles discernable from scripture that have an immediate bearing upon our present study:

a. Angels are an order of creature apart from mankind:

Everything in the heavens and on the earth was created by Him (Jesus Christ), things invisible as well as those visible – whether thrones, authorities, rulers or powers, everything was created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:16

One of the more pernicious misconceptions of contemporary, conventional wisdom about angels is the completely fallacious and harmful notion that angels are departed human beings. Nothing could be further from the truth. Scripture is clear about the fact that angels preceded man in God’s creation (Job 38:6-7), and that mankind was originally created with less glory and power than the angelic creation (Ps.8:4-5).⁵

b. Angels are finite beings: Despite their obvious present superiority, as created beings, angels are also dependent upon time and space. Though more powerful (2Thes.1:7; 2Pet.2:11), mobile (Gen.28:12) and knowledgeable (2Sam.14:20) than mankind, they are neither omniscient (Matt.24:36), nor omnipotent (Rom.8:38), nor omnipresent (Dan.10:13). Angels are often described as the “host of heaven” and otherwise compared to the innumerable stars (e.g., Job 25:3; Ps.103:20-21; Is.40:26 w. Lk.2:13), but although they are a highly organized group and quite numerous it should be understood that they are finite in number, however large that undisclosed number may be (Deut.33:2; Ps.68:17; Dan.7:10; Heb.12:22; Rev.5:11).

It has been debated over the centuries whether angels are spiritual or material, and the common opinion has, more often than not, come down in favor of the former on account of such passages

⁴ In Lk.10:20, our Lord gives us the proper perspective: “But don’t rejoice over this, namely that the [evil] spirits obey you; rather rejoice that your names have been written in heaven.”

⁵ For the distinction between angels and mankind, see also 1Cor.6:3; Heb.1:14; Heb.2:16; 12:22-23.

as Hebrews 1:7 & 14. Indeed, angels, as depicted in scripture, are not subject to many of the material restrictions under which we labor. They apparently do not grow old, or hungry or tired. They can, on occasion, even enter into human bodies (as in cases of demon possession: Lk.8:26-39), and are, for the most part, completely invisible to us, even as they go about their work in our world (or mischief as the case may be). These and other facts speak to the immaterial aspect of their nature. However, angels can at times appear in bodily form (as in the case of the announcement of Christ's birth: Lk.2:8-15), and can also affect the material world with great power (consider the angels who control the winds: Rev.7:1-3). These further facts, taken in conjunction with their subordination to time and space discussed above, make it clear enough that angels, though "spiritual" in substance, are not excused from being vulnerable to certain material restrictions and restraints as well. For example, they can be confined and made subject to the compulsion of God's judgment (as in the case of the final disposition of the fallen angels: Matt.25:41).

A brief consideration of the future, post-resurrection bodies we are destined to receive (after the pattern of our Lord, Jesus Christ) will be helpful in this connection.⁶ Man is a spiritual, as well as a material creature (more about this in part 3 of this present series), but while our present body possesses an earthly materiality, we are told (and shown by the example of Christ in resurrection) that our coming body will possess a heavenly materiality. As the apostle Paul puts it, "[the human body] is sown a *natural* body; it is raised a *spiritual* body" (1Cor.15:44). Now we know from the example of Christ that this "spiritual" body is still a body in every sense of the word: Jesus was still discernable to His disciples, talked, walked, even ate with them; and when doubting Thomas finally saw Him, Jesus commanded him to "thrust your hand into My side" – in no small part to demonstrate the true materiality of our Lord's new "spiritual-body". Corporeality, the possession of a true body, is thus a hallmark of the human being, before *and after* resurrection. Such is not the case for the angels, however. In Luke 24:39, our resurrected Lord appearing to His frightened disciples assures them that "a spirit (*pneuma* – the same word used for angels in Heb.1:7 & 14) does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." This absence of true corporeal substance on the part of the angels is at the root of many of the differences between us: our spirits are willing, but our flesh (now) is weak and a major source of the temptations that confront us, temptations to which the angels are oblivious (for example, they have no need for money). In a curious way, however, the very *absence* of sensual experience that only a true body can supply was apparently no small contributing cause in the fall from grace of many of Satan's angels (see section IV below).

c. Angels are temporarily superior to mankind in many ways: Having established that angels are creatures too, and that they are not possessed of infinite power and ability, it is important to acknowledge that this power and ability of theirs is considerable, especially in comparison to mankind. First and foremost, angels are not subject to death (Lk.20:36), nor do they reproduce (Mk.12:25), leading us to the conclusion that their number has been the same since their collective creation. That is not to say, of course, that the fallen angels will not be

⁶ For a detailed treatment of the resurrection, see the Peter series, lesson #20.

subject to separation from God forever and eternal punishment (an event which, in the case of human beings, is termed the “second death”: Rev.20:14 w. Matt.25:41). So while mankind is enjoying a sequential residence on earth (generation following generation), angelic kind has been experiencing a continuum of existence in heaven, even before the creation of Man. This longevity, combined with the fact that they are not subject to the restraints and necessities of time and space that encumber mankind, undoubtedly contributes to their superior knowledge and wisdom. Yet we should point out that, by its very essence, the angelic nature is superior to our present earthly human nature in terms of appearance, intellect, power, mobility and authority (2Pet.2:11). Such, however, will not always be the case, for just as our Lord (who is our precursor in the resurrection) is superior to angels in every way, including all aspects of His humanity (Heb.1:4 - 2:18), so also we are destined to share that superiority with Him in our resurrection (1Cor.6:3; Heb.2:5).

d. Angels are similar to mankind in several important ways: Despite their present, relative superiority to mankind, as fellow creatures of God, angels share some important attributes with us. Like us, they possess personality and individuality (as evidenced, for example, by joy: Job 38:4-7; Lk.15:10; desire: 1Pet.1:12; and choice: Jude 6). And like us, they are created to serve and worship God for His glory (Ps.103:20-21; 148:2; Matt.4:11; Heb.1:14; Rev.4:8). As in the case of human beings, this service and worship is not compulsory, but something God desires from angelic kind *of their own free will* (exactly as He desires our free will allegiance to Himself through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ). This proposition implies what is elsewhere in scripture made very clear: while most angels have chosen to continue following and serving their Creator, some have rejected Him, and are destined to face the consequences of their action (Matt.25:41). These two groups of angels are traditionally referred to as elect and fallen angels (based upon 1Tim.5:21 and Is.14:12 respectively). As to the fallen angels, we know from specific scripture references (e.g., Job 4:18; 2Pet.2:4; Jude 6) as well as from their association with Satan (whose fall we shall explore below) that their “fallen” status is not the result of some arbitrary decision of their Creator; rather it is a direct result of their own, individual choices to reject Him and His authority. This moral accountability, then, is the most important similarity between angels and humans: we have both been given an existence wherein the primary issue is our choice to follow (or reject) God.

The differences between the character of our choice and their choice is entirely explainable by the differences in our respective natures. Angels, originally existing in a holy state, made their decisions long ago, before the creation of Man. We human beings, however, are limited as to life-span (not to mention our geographic, intellectual and physical constraints). Even more significant is the fact that we are *born sinful*, and as a result must choose to turn away from sin toward God (through faith in Jesus Christ) in order to be saved. The angels, by contrast, were all *created holy*, and, as a result of this quite different circumstance, faced a very different choice: to remain loyal to the Lord of the universe, or to choose instead to turn away from God and join in Satan’s sinful rebellion.

God's ineffable wisdom shines through pellucidly in this distinction of choices presented to us on the one hand and to our angelic fellow creatures on the other. Angels are by nature such that their ultimate decision of whether or not to stay faithful to God seems to be the sum of themselves from eternity past to eternity future. That is to say, they are not subject to the temporal restraints, limited knowledge and deceptiveness of the flesh that produces in us the capability of "changing our minds" (whether towards repentance or apostasy). The very longevity, intellect and ability which angels possess apparently produces a certainty and resolution of decision-making that is largely unaffected by historical developments. As human beings, we have all experienced the change of perspective which the passage of time can produce – a factor of our gradually increasing knowledge, experience, and, one would hope, wisdom. Angels, vastly superior in intellect and knowledge at the point of creation, have already logged thousands of years of existence – and that without experiencing the process of maturing and aging. This is not to say that angels are incapable of learning or of being surprised by the unfolding of God's plan in human history, but it does seem to indicate that their perspective is more universal, spiritual, even eternal – it is a perspective little changed from the beginning to the end of time on account of their unique nature. Angelic decision-making seems to encompass or "straddle" time in a way we temporal creatures cannot fully appreciate. Therefore angels (who started out perfect and either were confirmed in their loyalty-perfection or lost it when they rebelled and fell) seem to have made their decision about the Lord *once and for all*. They do not experience "changes of heart" in the way we human beings sometimes do, turning to the Lord (or, sadly, away from Him on occasion), precisely because their nature is so different from ours. So while these fellow creatures of God share with us the fact that the central issue in their existence is to choose for or against the Lord, the manner in which they have done so in the pre-human past is thus different from the manner in which we now do so in human history.

Indeed, the idea that we can change our minds (repent), and, more importantly, that God has found a way to accommodate our repentance and to provide for our deliverance from sin is a source of surprise and fascination to the angels (e.g., 1Tim.5:21; 1Pet.1:10-12). For just as we would have a difficult time seeing things from the angelic perspective, so angels cannot fully appreciate our human point of view, not being creatures of spirit *and* body as we are. And how could they? They are creatures for whom repentance is an existential impossibility (as is "backsliding"). Whereas, in the case of Man, we start imperfect and in need of help (salvation, as provided through Christ's sacrifice). In the process of "working out our salvation" a number of twists and turns may very well take place. Being subject to a finite, temporal life, to pressures and temptations that are part and parcel of being in the flesh (especially the corrupted flesh), being under fire from the angelic dimension (would Adam and Eve have sinned without Satan?), and being limited in our knowledge under the best of circumstances (especially compared to the angels), we find ourselves in a very different position from our angelic brethren – not perfect creatures who must refrain from choosing the wrong path, but imperfect, already condemned creatures who must choose to accept the gracious gift of life in Jesus Christ and persevere in our walk with Him in order to lay hold of eternal life.

This difference in our natures, in the essence of our free will choices, and therefore in our perspectives about God’s dealings with us is critical for a proper understanding of His treatment of angels and men respectively. For it helps to explain the testimony of the scriptures to the effect that angels are actually learning about God from observing the unfolding of His plan of salvation on earth:⁷

1. As seen from their observation of the life of Jesus Christ:

[Jesus Christ], who appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the [Holy] Spirit, **was revealed to angels** (i.e., was observed by them), was preached among the nations, was believed upon in the world, was taken up in glory.

1st Timothy 3:16

2. As seen from their witnessing the progress of believers:

I charge you before God [the Father], and Christ Jesus, and **the elect angels**, that you keep to these [commands] without partiality, doing nothing out of favoritism.

1st Timothy 5:21

3. As seen from their desire to know about God’s plan of salvation:

Even as they foretold this salvation that was to come to you, the prophets of old diligently investigated and inquired about this [gift] of grace, being eager to discover the precise time the Spirit of Christ within them was signifying as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories [of salvation, among other things] that would follow [the cross]. For it was revealed to them that in prophesying these things, they were not so much serving themselves as they were you – and these same things have now been proclaimed to you through those who gave you the gospel through the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven – **even angels want to look into these things.**

1st Peter 1:10-12

Elsewhere, we are told that the apostles were made “a spectacle to the whole universe, *to angels* as well as to men” (1Cor.4:9), that “*because of the angels*” women should maintain a sign of authority on their heads (1Cor.11:10), that there is “joy in heaven” over every repentant sinner (Lk.15:10: i.e., from the angels; cf. Lk.12:8-9; Rev.3:5), but that those who reject Christ to worship the antichrist will be tormented “in the presence of the Lamb *and His holy angels*” (Rev.14:10). Moreover, it is quite significant that angels are recorded as present at all the major events in the life of Christ: His birth (Lk.2:13-14), temptation (Matt.4:11), resurrection (Lk.24:4),

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the topic of angelic observation in the context of Christian testing, see the Peter series, lesson #22.

ascension (Acts 1:10-11), and return (2Thes.1:7) – a fact which underscores angelic interest in this the most crucial phase of God’s plan.⁸

Thus angelic interest in human affairs transcends the completion of their duties and ministries on our behalf (e.g., Heb.1:7 & 14). As they observe human beings escaping the slavery of sin, choosing for God and trusting Him in spite of all opposition, they are “learning” something very important about Him: they see His righteousness, His justice, His power and His love in the mission, sacrifice and victory of Jesus Christ and its effective transmission to believing humanity.

God’s faithfulness to us through and on the basis of the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, while essential to our salvation and subsequent spiritual growth, also carries an important “lesson” for the angels. We learn about the faithfulness of God by *experience* at salvation and afterwards; the holy angels, however, have never had need of salvation, nor have they ever been hungry or thirsty, nor have they ever been in danger or experienced the fear and the grief of death. Because their nature exempts them from most of the pressures that so define our human existence, they cannot learn about the faithfulness of God personally, but can only do so by *observation* of His great love and mercy to us here on earth as we are bombarded by the devil’s attacks. Angels exist by Christ and for Christ, but can only fully appreciate Him (and the Father) by actually viewing the sacrifice of the cross and the playing out of God’s plan in perfect faithfulness to human beings who choose to believe.

Thus it is that angelic observation of the working out of God’s plan of salvation in human history, both strategically (i.e., the provision of salvation through Christ’s incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, session and return) and tactically (i.e., the imparting of salvation to and support of the progress of individual believers) is a necessary ingredient in God’s destruction of the works of the devil and in His ultimate restoration of harmony and order to His creation (1Jn.3:8):

1. As seen from the ultimate *consummation* of all elect angelic and human kind in Christ:

[The Father] has made known to us the mystery He has willed according to His own good pleasure which He purposed in Him, [Jesus Christ], for administering this [present] fulfillment of the epochs (i.e., “these last days”; cf. Heb.1:2; 1Pet.1:10): namely the incorporation of all things in Christ, *things in heaven*, and things on earth.

Ephesians 1:9-10

2. As seen from the ultimate *demonstration* to angels through the Church of God’s ineffable wisdom in sending His Son to die for us:

⁸ See L.S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas 1947) v.2, p.26 for more references.

This gracious favor has been given to me, the least of His saints: to give to the gentiles the good news of the indescribable wealth [that is in] Christ, and to enlighten everyone as to how this mystery (once hidden from the ages in God who created everything) is now being administered, so that the enigmatically intricate wisdom of God might be made known to *the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms* through the agency of the Church.

Ephesians 3:8-10

3. As seen from the ultimate *reconciliation* of all heavenly matters through Christ:

For it was [God's] good pleasure for the fulfillment [of His plan] to reside entirely in [Christ], and so through Him to reconcile everything to Himself (having made peace through Him, through the blood of His cross) – whether things on earth, *or things in heaven*.

Colossians 1:19-20

The three passages above explain (among other things) the effect of God's plan of salvation on angelic affairs: by observing the sacrifice of Christ and God's resultant calling of the gentiles through the formation of the Church of Jesus Christ, the angels learn about 1) Christ's authority and centrality in God's plan (Eph.1:9-10); 2) the breathtaking wisdom of God's plan in sending Christ and calling out the Church (Eph.3:8-10); 3) the ultimate effect of God's plan in reestablishing complete harmony and peace in heaven and on earth based upon Christ's sacrifice (Col.1:19-20).

The point made by the last passage treated above, Colossians 1:19-20, calls for some comment. One element in this angelic "instruction by observation of human history" is, no doubt, the complete refutation of Satan's deceptive (and self-deceptive) assertion of God's inability to confront his rebellion, an assertion used in the first instance to deceive fellow angels and win them to his cause (see section IV below), and in the second to deceive and ensnare mankind (an operation still very much in progress: see part 4 of this series). Based upon what we know of the fall of Satan and his present modus operandi, we would not be far wrong in reconstructing the essence of this false assumption as follows:

I and my followers shall be free of God's retribution, because if God were to destroy us or otherwise eternally punish us, the completeness and harmony that a God-like universe demands would be forever lost, because . . .

- 1) God cannot replace us (no completeness), and
- 2) God cannot rehabilitate us (no harmony),
- 3) therefore God cannot punish us.

How ironic it is that Satan, who knew much better than we the awesome power of God, has been relying all along *on the character of God* to protect him from the wrath of God! No doubt he thought to put God in an insoluble dilemma: either tolerate the breach in universal order and harmony or rend unity and peace forever by crushing Satan. Satan counted on God's tolerating evil rather taking an irrevocable step that would permanently mar His creation. But Satan, who should have had a better understanding than anyone else in the universe of the ineffable wisdom of our God (who planned the beginning and the end of all things before time began and who is therefore incapable of being surprised), failed to take this paramount consideration into account. The present working out of the Father's great plan of salvation in the person of Christ is demonstrating this very fact to Satan and his followers:

1) Replacement: Elect mankind is, in effect, replacing fallen angelic kind in God's universal order (Lk.10:17-20; 1Cor.6:3; Rev.20:4). Though aware of God's ability to produce other creatures, Satan seems to have assumed that such an action could prove futile, because, if given the requisite free will, these new creatures would react similarly to the angels. However, elect human beings (who choose to be saved) are a perfect complement to elect angels (who chose not to sin) and a fitting replacement for the fallen angels who would not choose to be reconciled to God.

2) Rehabilitation: Beyond the issue of choice is the issue of opportunity. Satan also must have reasoned that God would not be able to provide a means to expiate sin. Therefore no rehabilitation (or salvation) of angels would be possible. But the Father's plan of salvation for mankind through the blood of Jesus Christ – *God becoming Man* – was an event the devil never anticipated. Through the analogy of mankind, the angels are seeing first hand that if any fallen angels *would have* repented (an action contrary to their nature as we have seen), God *could have* provided the means of restoring them to Himself, as indeed He *has* done for sinful mankind at the highest price of all: the sacrifice of His only Son on our behalf.

3) Satan's Conclusion: The false assumption that God would be unable to restore harmony and completeness to His creation has thus been refuted by His creation and salvation of elect mankind. By making and saving Man through Christ, the Father has, in effect, knocked both props out from under Satan's assertion that God would be unable to punish him for his rebellion. The reconciliation of human beings to God throughout time, paid for historically by Jesus Christ, and picking up momentum as we draw ever nearer to the end of things, has clearly given the lie to Satan's confident assertion. These are surely things *even angels want to look into* (1Pet.1:12).

This discussion of the original satanic rationale (expanded upon in section IV below) helps to explain Satan's dogged opposition to the inexorable plan of God as it has been working in the lives of men since our first parents were expelled from the garden. For God's deliverance of us through Christ and His promise to us of eternal life in Christ demonstrates unmistakably to all angelic kind that He *can* and *will* and *is* replacing Satan and his followers, the end of which is eternal punishment for their unrepentant rebellion against the One who made them. For as it says

in 1st John 3:8, Christ appeared “to destroy the works of the devil”. Satan thus badly misjudged God’s wisdom and ability relative to both angels and men, failing to fully understand that the ultimate working out of His love, justice and truth would inevitably result in redemption or replacement, justification or rejection, and reconciliation or punishment (as has transpired for mankind through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ):⁹

God’s goodness overflows with love, providing grace for sinful Man:

though evil says a loving God can not condemn,

He did condemn His Son that we might live,
redeeming us in love with the blood of Christ.

God’s holiness overflows in justice, offering mercy to sinful Man:

though evil says a just God can not forgive,

He did forgive us, by condemning His own Son,
making us righteous through the blood of Christ.

God’s faithfulness and truth overflow in life, producing peace with God for sinful Man:

though evil says that a God of integrity can not restore us,

He did make peace between us through His Son,
reconciling us to Himself and granting us eternal life on the basis of the blood of Christ.

e. A balanced perspective on angels: When discussing the topic of angels, their similarities to us and differences from us, it is important that we keep in mind both their present superiority to us, and their eventual subordination. Angels are not to be disrespected (Lk.10:20; 2Pet.2:10-12; Jude 8-10; cf. Rom.13:7), but neither are they to be worshiped (Rev.19:10; 22:9; cf. 2Kng.17:16; Jer.19:13; Col.2:18). This tandem of caveats is especially important in regard to fallen angels. Possessing as they do all the attributes and history discussed above, Satan and his angels are formidable adversaries; and yet at the same time we must keep in mind that they are not the only angels: God counterbalances their evil efforts with the work and ministrations of His holy, elect angels. Therefore, although we are to have a healthy respect for the Adversary and his potential to oppose us (2Cor.2:11; Eph.6:11; 1Pet.5:8), we are not to be unduly terrified by him and his minions. And while we are to have an awareness and appreciation for the positive function of the elect angels on our behalf, we are not to be inordinately fixated upon them (especially since both their persons and their work are invisible to us). In neither case should we “go beyond what is written” in the Bible about angels, whether through excessive fear of Satanic influence or an exorbitant fascination with the ministrations of the holy angels. After all, it is God whom we are to fear, God whom we are to love and follow, and it is upon God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord that we are to fix our gaze while here in the devil’s world.

⁹ See Part 1 of Essential Doctrines of the Bible: Theology: the Study of God.

Only do not rejoice in this, that the spirits obey you. But [rejoice] that your names have been recorded in heaven.

Luke 10:20

II. Angelic Pre-History:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

1) The Creation of Angels: At some undisclosed time following His creation of the heavens and the earth, God created the angels (Ps.148:2-5; Col.1:16). That is to say, at some specific point between the original creation of Genesis 1:1 and the restoration of the earth described in Job 38:4-7 (see section IV below)¹⁰ which followed God's judgment of Satan, God created all angelic kind. He created them holy (Deut.33:2; Ps.89:7; Mk.8:38; Lk.9:26), giving each of them distinct duties and definite domains in which to exercise their delegated authority (Col.1:16; Eph.6:12; Heb.1:7 & 14; Jude 6).

2) The Realm of Angels: The realm of angels is often assumed to be the heavens, and to a certain degree this is true, at least at this present time: a) they are often called "heavenly hosts" (1Kng.22:19; Ps.103:20-21; 148:2; Lk.2:13); b) angels are invariably present on the heavenly scene (1Kng.22:19; Job 1:6-7; 2:1-2; Lk.15:7 & 10; Rev.5:11); c) and angels are often identified with the stars of heaven (Job 38:7; Is.14:12 & 13; 40:26; Rev.1:20; 9:1-2). Since elsewhere in scripture stars are literally stars (cf. Gen.1:16b), it is likely that this designation is a reference to angelic spheres of authority (cf. Eph.1:20-21; 3:10; Col.1:16). Fallen angels, for example, are termed "wandering stars" in Jude 13 (in a comparison to false teachers where the reference to "blackest darkness ... reserved forever" recalls the lake of fire in supernatural darkness prepared for the devil and his angels; cf. Matt.8:12). This term is reminiscent of their failure to "keep their own domain", i.e., choosing to interfere with human affairs in Satan's behalf, they abandoned their ordained, heavenly realm, (Jude 6).¹¹

3) The Three Heavens: What exactly is meant, then, by heaven? When we speak of the heavens in biblical terms, we are referring to the three-fold division of the cosmos beyond the earth: a)

¹⁰ God's destruction and restoration of earth pursuant to Satan's rebellion is discussed in detail in The Genesis Gap, part 2 of this series.

¹¹ Fallen angels are also connected by scripture to the stars in their capacity as demons masquerading as "gods" (Deut.4:19; 17:3; Acts 7:43). It should be noted, however, that believers are also occasionally referred to as stars to emphasize heavenly approval in the face of satanic persecution (Dan.8:10-13 & 24 [*not* NIV]; 12:3; Phil.2:15; Rev.12:1 & 4 [where both are meant]).

the earth's atmosphere ("the sky"); b) the universe at large (i.e., "space"); c) the "third heaven", the abode of God (or simply "heaven", as it is customarily termed).

The Hebrew word for "heavens" is *shamayim* (שמַיִם), a noun whose form is, significantly, dual in number (i.e., "two" of something as opposed to a single unit, or multiple units beyond a pair).¹² The dual of the Hebrew word *shamayim* perfectly reflects the reality of the two distinct parts of the heavens (sky and space) in one continuum. We may refer to these as the first heaven (the atmosphere) and the second heaven (the universe beyond earth) respectively.

However in verse fourteen of Genesis chapter one, the *raqiyah*, or firmament, is now the place of the sun, moon and stars. Significantly, the exact Hebrew terminology used in verse fourteen is *raqiyah-hasshamyim*, "firmament of the heavens". The difference is a substantial one, for it suggests that these *shamayim*, or "heavens", are in some sense distinct from those referred to earlier. From our earthly perspective as we look up at the night sky today (and how much more so in 1400 B.C.), the heavens that surround us (i.e., the atmosphere) and the heavens above (i.e., space, or the universe) appear as one continuum. The dual of the Hebrew word *shamayim* perfectly reflects this reality of two distinct elements (sky and space) in one continuum. These are the first heaven (the atmosphere) and the second heaven (the universe beyond earth) respectively and collectively.

The third heaven, on the other hand, is the abode of God. In 2nd Corinthians 12:2-4, the apostle Paul describes a man "snatched up" to this "third heaven"; in verse four, the location is also referred to as "paradise", a word which in biblical terms suggests the presence of and fellowship with God (see below). This third heaven is also referred to in the Old Testament as the *shamey shamayim* "heavens of the heavens", a Hebrew idiom for "highest heavens" (Deut.10:14; Ps.148:4; cf. Eph.4:10). Thus, in the Bible, all three parts or levels of the heavens (the sky, the universe, and the abode of God) can be and often are called "heaven" individually and collectively without the various authors of scripture feeling any need to distinguish the three, as this concept of the three-fold division of the *shamayim* was apparently well understood in biblical times. Angels are capable of entering all three sections of the heavens, but a word must be said at this point about their reasons for doing so.

4) The Operational Sphere of Angels: For a variety of reasons, for example their occasional association with the stars (see above) and their apparently hierarchical organization (cf. Matt.26:53; Eph.1:20-21; 3:10; Col.1:16; 1Thes.4:16; Jude 9), we conjecture that angels have

¹² Although most western scholarship currently argues that the form is plural (the Hebraic tradition considers the form dual: cf. M. Mansoor's grammar), the justifications usually given for this conclusion strain credulity in light of 1) the obvious dual-type formation of the word, and 2) the biblical usage (where "two" heavens of sky and atmosphere repeatedly occur). It is no doubt due to a reluctance to accept that the Bible might indeed give a correct picture of the universe's construction that has rendered the questionable hypothesis (of reading *shamayim* as plural) a widespread one.

spheres of authority and certain duties in the second heaven (the universe at large), although the scriptures do not provide an exhaustive account of these (cf. also Jude 6). We know more about their journeys to the first heaven and their ministrations on God's behalf to mankind (in the case of the elect angels), or their attempts to carry out Satan's designs against mankind (in the case of the fallen angels). These ministries (and satanic operations) will be treated more fully in part 4 of this series, but suffice it to say at this point that angels are actively conducting operations here on earth, *although it is not **at present** their primary sphere*. Jacob's vision of the famous "ladder" which revealed multitudes of angels ascending to heaven and descending to earth illustrates clearly enough that the elect angels do not remain upon the earth at all times, but rather return to heaven at certain intervals (Gen.28:12; cf. Jn.1:51). Even Satan, described in Ephesians 2:2 as "the prince of the power of the air", that is "the ruler whose realm of authority is the atmosphere" (Greek *aer*, referring to the first heaven and thus stressing his temporary, limited authority over the earth), does not remain here at all times, but on specified occasions assembles with the other angels in the presence of God, the third heaven (Job 1:6; 2:1; and cf. 1Kng.22:19).

Angelic assembly before and fellowship with God in the third heaven is important and revealing. It should not be surprising that, in addition to their actions here on earth and in the universe at large, the angels are frequently to be found in the presence of the Lord. For they are *His* angels (Gen.28:12; 32:1; Ps.103:20; Matt.26:53) and logically therefore assemble where He is (Deut.33:2; 1Kng.22:19; Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps.82:1; 89:5 & 7; Matt.18:10) to worship, serve and attend *Him* (1Kng.22:19; Dan.7:10; Rev.5:11-12). The angels (the elect ones, at any rate) have always and will always follow this pattern, even with the return of the Trinity to earth at the end of human history (Heb.12:22; Rev.21:12; cf. Rev.21-22). Therefore what determines the place of angelic assembly is not the particular level of heaven, but rather the *presence of God*. And just as the elect angels always assemble in His presence, so when this present short and temporary era we call human history is concluded, believing humanity will likewise assemble in the presence of the Lord for all eternity. After all, the Greek word *ekklesia* (which we translate "church") *means* "assembly". This place of assembly will ultimately be the new earth and, specifically the new Jerusalem (Rev.21-22). What is most pertinent to our current study is that the original place of angelic assembly was likewise not in heaven, but rather on the pristine, original earth.

5) Eden: the Original Home of Angels and Ultimate Home of Elect Mankind: Eden is most commonly associated with the garden in which God placed Adam and Eve. And while Adam and Eve's Eden was certainly one Eden it was neither the first nor the last "paradise" (as is obvious from passages such as Ezek.28:13; Lk.16:19-31; 23:43; 2Cor.12:4; Rev.2:7; 22:2).

a) Etymology: As far as meaning is concerned, "paradise" and Eden are functionally almost synonymous. Respectively, Eden is the Old Testament and paradise the New Testament term for the place of the pleasurable presence of God. Eden (Hebrew '*eden*,]di) means "pleasure" or "delight". In a similar way, "paradise" (Greek *paradeisos*, παραδεισος), a Persian word first used in Greek by the historian Xenophon, meant originally "the king's private

preserve”, a unique and “delightful” place.¹³ Thus it was quite a natural thing to substitute the term “paradise” as a Greek equivalent to the Hebrew phrase “the garden of Eden/delight”.¹⁴ What, then, is so pleasurable about Eden-paradise? Nothing less than the presence of God, in whom is all joy and delight (Ps.21:6; 27:4-6; 84:10)!

b) The Illustration of the Tabernacle: The construction of Israel’s tabernacle helps to explain and illustrate this relationship between Eden-paradise and God’s manifest presence. It will be recalled that the layout and furniture of the tabernacle are patterns or types, “a copy and shadow of the things in heaven” (Heb.8:5). Time does not permit a thorough discussion of all the symbolism and detail of the law here, but a brief discussion will be useful, for the tabernacle is itself a picture of the present “Eden”, that is, the third heaven where God is currently in manifest residence (Lk.23:43).

Entrance into the tabernacle is not permissible without first passing the altar (where the blood sacrifices depict the saving work of Christ on our behalf in various ways; cf. certain cases where there is an actual placing of the hand on the victim's head) and the laver (where the symbolic washing away of sin on the basis of the sacrificial work of Christ is clear enough; cf. John's water-baptism). The only way to get into the tabernacle (heaven) is through the blood (of Christ) and appropriate cleansing (forgiveness on the basis of Christ’s sacrifice). The rituals ordained for the high priest on the Day of Atonement give an especially vivid picture of the restoration of a way into the presence of God, into the Eden-delight of His company. He is behind the veil that separates the holy place from the holy of holies, a place entered only once a year by the high priest in a picture of the ascension of Jesus Christ to the throne room of the Father. The blood of the sacrifice represents Christ’s work, while the “mercy seat” with its two golden cherubs represents the Father’s throne (described in 1st Chronicles 28:18 as a “chariot”, the form of the throne of the Lord as we know from e.g., Ezek.1:4-28), and His acceptance of Christ’s work. It is also significant to note that the veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies, replete with embroidered cherubim (the protectors of the holiness of God from anything profane), was split from top to bottom immediately after the death of our Lord opened the way for us back into fellowship with the Father (Matt.27:51):

(19) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence in this entrance of ours into the [heavenly] holy of holies by the blood of Jesus, (20) an entryway through the [heavenly] veil [of separation] which is new¹⁵ and alive and which He has consecrated for us, that is [through the sacrifice] of His flesh (cf. Heb.10:10; 10:18), (21) and since we have [this] great high priest over the household of God, let us approach [the throne of grace (cf. Heb.4:16) to pray] with a truthful heart in complete faith, (22) our hearts sprinkled [clean]

¹³ Compare the Hebrew *pardes*, used at Neh.2:8; Eccl.2:5; SS.4:13.

¹⁴ So the LXX, and later the New Testament.

¹⁵ Literally, “newly slain” or “freshly slaughtered”.

of [any] bad conscience and our bodies washed with pure water [of the Word (cf. Eph.5:26)].
Hebrews 10:19-22

In the passage above, the writer of Hebrews makes clear the analogy between the tabernacle and the throne room of heaven. The earthly holy of holies, where the mercy seat resides atop the ark of the covenant, is an unambiguous type of the Father's throne, and therefore a symbol of the presence of the Father. Until the efficacious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His Son, there was no admittance for sinful man into His holy presence, but now all who accept Jesus Christ do have that access on the basis of the work of the one who "split the veil" sacrificing His own body on our behalf. Before the sacrificial death, resurrection, ascension and session of Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father (Ps.110:1; Rom.8:34; Eph.1:20-22; Phil.2:9; Heb.1:3; 12:2; 1Pet.3:22), those who died in the Lord were conveyed not to heaven, but to "Abraham's bosom", the pleasurable part of *sheol* located beneath the earth (Lk.16:19-31; and cf. 1Sam.2:6; 28:15; 1Kng.2:6; Job 11:8; Ps.139:8; Is.7:11). By His victory at the cross, however, Christ won a literal "access" into the Father's presence, so that paradise is now to be found in the third heaven (1Pet.3:18-19):

I know a man, [a believer] in Christ – fourteen years earlier such a one was snatched up to the *third heaven* (in his body perhaps, or out of it, I don't know – God knows). And I know that this man (in his body perhaps, or out of it, I don't know – God knows) was snatched up to *paradise*, and heard inexpressible words which are not permissible for a man to speak.
2nd Corinthians 12:2-4

The tabernacle, then, is a picture of the third heaven, with the ark and its mercy seat representing the throne of the Father in the holy of holies (cf. Rev.5:11-12), and with the veil and its embroidered cherubim representing the separation between God and mankind which was rent in two by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (Matt.27:51; Mk.15:38; Lk.23:45; cf. Heb.10:20).

The holy place, the larger of the two rooms in the tabernacle, is also representative of the fellowship between God and sanctified believers in paradise. Like a new garden of Eden, there believers who have passed over to be with the Lord enjoy the inexpressible pleasure of fellowship with the Trinity (cf. Ex.29:44-45), an event foreshadowed by the three articles contained in the holy place (Ex.25:23-40; 30:1-10). After accepting Christ's sacrifice at the altar on our behalf and after being cleansed from our sins at the laver through His work, we enter the holy place containing the golden table, the golden lampstand, and the golden altar of incense (gold being a symbol of divinity). In one sense, these three articles are reminiscent of the blessed provisions of the tree of life enjoyed by Adam and Eve in the garden before the fall: the shape of the golden lampstand recalls the appearance of the tree of life (Ex.25:33-34)¹⁶; the bread of the

¹⁶ The lampstand or menorah is meant to represent the almond, the ultimate of the "best fruits of the land" (Gen.43:11), and, significantly, the form taken by Aaron's rod when it budded

presence on the golden table recalls its fruit (compare the twelve loaves of Lev.24:5-9 with the twelve crops of Rev.22:2; and cf. the analogies of manna and communion); and the incense from the golden altar recalls its fragrance. But it is in their depiction of Jesus Christ, the true “tree of life” (Jn.15:1-8; Rom.11:17-24), that these three articles have their most profound significance; in heaven, we are destined to enjoy the benefits of the tree of life (Rev.2:7; 22:14 & 19) because of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who died on a tree to give us access to the eternal life the tree of life represents (1Pet.2:24):

- The Bread: The “bread of presence” on the golden table is a picture of Christ the Bread of Life (Jn.6:35: “I am the bread of life”) *being offered* by the Father (Jn.3:16).
- The Light: The light emanating from the golden lampstand is a picture of Christ the Light of the world (Jn.8:12: “I am the light of the world) *being empowered* by the Holy Spirit (Is.11:2; Rev.1:4; and cf. Lk.4:18, the anointing oil of the Spirit).
- The Aroma: The incense rising from the golden altar directly before the veil of the holy of holies is a picture of Christ in resurrection ascending to heaven (Jn.11:25: “I am the resurrection and the life”) *having provided* through His sacrifice a fragrant aroma of salvation most acceptable to the Father (Eph.5:2; cf. Heb.1:3).

All of us blessed to die in the Lord are privileged to enter and abide in the tabernacle-paradise of God, where we shall begin to enjoy His fellowship forever more. These three articles also speak to God’s eternal provision for us in the paradise to come: 1) the bread speaks of physical sustenance and life, eternal life; 2) the light speaks of spiritual illumination and truth, divine truth; 3) the incense speaks of physical and spiritual joy, everlasting joy. In the tabernacle of heaven, all our needs will be provided for as we fellowship with the Trinity for all eternity because of the sacrifice of Jesus and our decision to follow Him in this life. Thus the tabernacle is effective shorthand for the eternal bliss that should be our focus in this life, as well as the means to achieving it through acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ.

As illustrated by the tabernacle, therefore, Eden (or paradise) is the place where God fellowships with sanctified mankind. It is a place of delight because there is no greater joy than communing with God apart from sin and the troubles of the world we now know. But despite the trials and tribulations that are inevitable for believers in the devil’s world, it is also important to note that in this place that is certainly no paradise, God has nevertheless always made it possible for those who would seek Him to “walk with Him” (Gen.5:24). Moreover, in the days of Israel, He dwelt amongst the congregation of believers (Ex.25:8), and today He and His Son dwell in the hearts of those who have believed and so received His Holy Spirit (Jn.14:23; 1Cor.3:16-17; 6:19; 2Cor.6:16). Our fellowship with God now is a foretaste of the bliss and delight of the restored Eden to come, when “the dwelling of God” shall “come to men” (Rev.21:3 & 21:22). It remains to consider in a comprehensive manner all the manifestations of Eden-paradise, in order to lay a

(Num.17:8).

sure foundation for our discussion of the original fall of one of God's creatures from that perfect fellowship, namely that of Satan.

6) The Seven Edens: As the foregoing discussion has indicated, the biblical terms Eden and paradise are synonymous for the place of perfect pleasure in fellowship with God. These words, therefore, have, as we have already seen in brief, a wider range of application than the garden in which God placed Adam and Eve. Common factors in every place that bears the name paradise (or Eden) include delightful sights and sounds, enjoyable work or worship, physical and spiritual wholeness, and, most importantly, the presence of and fellowship with God Himself. Seven distinct paradises may be distinguished in scripture. They are all perfect places God has established for communing with His creatures, dating from angelic pre-history to the end of time:

a) The Perfect Original Earth: The first Eden is particularly germane to our present study, as it was the original place of meeting between God and angelic kind. It was from this first Eden, the earth in its original pristine perfection (not to be confused with the restored earth, home to Adam and Eve's garden of Eden),¹⁷ that Satan was expelled.¹⁸ This much is made clear by Ezekiel 28:13, where God declares of Satan, "you were in Eden, the garden of God".¹⁹ This first paradise, the place of God's throne and God's presence, was, interestingly enough, not in heaven but on earth (on the "mount of assembly, the recesses of the north": Is.14:13; cf. Ezek.28:14 & 16; Ps.48:2 compared to Mt. Zion). Since this point will prove to be an important one, some of the other references in the context of Isaiah fourteen need to be considered in brief:

1) "fallen from heaven" in Isaiah 14:12 looks forward to the events of Revelation 12:9 (as does Ezekiel 28:17b: "I threw you to the earth"); Satan is expelled from this original paradise before the creation of man, but he will not be expelled from heaven until the appointed future time (cf. Job 1-2).

2) "I will ascend to heaven" in the first part of v.13 is better translated "heavenward", meaning to the top of the mount of assembly, the place of God's throne on earth directly above the "stars" (i.e., the other angels; cf. Job 25:3; Ps.103:20-21; Is.40:26 w. Lk.2:13).

¹⁷ See Part 2 of this series, The Genesis Gap, for a detailed discussion of the destruction of the original earth and its restoration as depicted in the seven days of Genesis chapter one.

¹⁸ See Part 5 of this series, Judgment, Restoration and Replacement. The commonality of names is deliberate, indicating that the newly created human race is meant as a direct replacement for Satan and his angels (just as the new garden of Eden on the new earth replaces the old Eden on the old, original earth - see Part 2 for details).

¹⁹ The applicability of Isaiah chapter fourteen and Ezekiel chapter twenty eight to Satan will be discussed during a complete exegesis of these passages beginning in section III below.

3) “above the tops of the clouds” in v.14 confirms the earthly location of this mountain which is so tall and imposing that it rises above the clouds, though located on the earth.

There are also a number of important points of similarity between this original lofty location of God’s throne and Mount Zion in Jerusalem:²⁰

1) It is a holy mountain (Is.14:13; Ezek.28:14 & 16), and so is Mount Zion (Is.56:7; 57:13; 65:11; Ezek.20:40).

2) It is high and lofty (Is.14:13-14), and Mount Zion is likewise destined to be raised above all other mountains (Is.2:2-3; Ezek.40:2; Mich.4:1; Zech.14:10). Note that the New Jerusalem appears to have this same superior elevation as the source of the river of the water of life which flows from before God’s throne (Rev.22:1-2).

3) As the seat of God’s throne, it is at the center of the universe of that time (Is.14:13-14; Ezek.28:13-16), just as Jerusalem is described as the “center of the world” (Ezek.38:12; cf. Ezek.5:5), and will be the ultimate place of God’s residence (Rev.21-22).

4) It is described as “Eden, the garden of God”, just as the New Jerusalem, the ultimate Eden, will contain the river of the waters of life and the tree of life (Rev.22:1-4).

b) The Interim Third Heaven: After Satan’s rebellion, the universe, naturally and from its original creation a place of light, was “blackened out”.²¹ We have no way of knowing how long the Lord left Satan and company in fearful anticipation of immediate judgment before restoring the earth and the universe. We can assume, however, that there was still a place where He made His presence known for fellowship with the elect angels. This would most likely be in heaven, given the devastation of planet earth as an initial judgment upon and restraint of Satan’s activities (a situation to be described in Part 2 of this series). When restoration of the earth does occur (along with the new Eden), we do in fact find the elect angels in God’s presence, filled with joy as they observe the event (Job 38:4-7).

²⁰ Whether the primal, angelic Eden was located at the same exact spot as the now and future Mount Zion is an open question. For instance, Mount Sinai is also called “the mountain of God” (Ex.4:27). However, Mount Sinai is a mountain of judgment (Gal.4:21-34; Heb.12:18-24), not of grace. When Abraham was instructed to sacrifice his son (Gen.22:2), it was to Mount Zion that God directed him for this foreshadowing of the gracious sacrifice of Jesus Christ (cf. 2Chron.3:1). In any case, it seems probable that along with the other three earthly Edens (the garden of Adam and Eve, millennial Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem), this primal Eden is also to be located within the confines of the sacred territory of Israel cum New Jerusalem (compare the dimensions of Num.34:1-12 with the proportionally expanded ones of Rev.21:15-16).

²¹ See Part 2 of this series, The Genesis Gap, for a detailed discussion of God’s judgment upon the original earth and universe as a result of Satan’s rebellion.

c) The Garden of Eden: The garden of Eden in which God placed Adam and Eve is by far the best known of the seven paradises. In Part 3 of this series, we shall cover the purpose, creation, and fall of Man in detail. Like the other Edens, it was a place of fellowship with God (Gen.2:16-17; 2:19; 3:8), a place of physical and spiritual delight (Gen.2:9), and a place of enjoyable occupation (Gen.2:15; 2:19-20; n.b., sweat and effort only exist after the fall: Gen.3:17-19). Attempts to fix a location for the garden based on the description of the rivers in Gen.2:10-14 (a difficult task when the significant geographical alterations that must have been wrought by the world-wide flood of Genesis chapter seven are considered), often fail to take into account that the mention of “Cush” (Gen.2:13) can be (and most probably is) a reference to the land of the Kassites (modern day southern Iraq),²² or that for the rivers to flow downhill, the location would have to have been elevated (as Jerusalem is).

d) Paradise: Believers who die in the Lord since His ascension to the presence of the Father go to be with Him where He is, in heaven (Jn.12:26; 14:1-3; 17:24; 2Cor.5:8; Phil.1:23). However, before the resurrection, ascension and session of our Lord Jesus Christ, pre-cross believers were not admitted into the third heaven, but were instead taken to a provisional paradise in the heart of the earth which Jesus calls “Abraham’s bosom” in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk.16:19-31; cf. 1Sam.28:15; 28:19; 2Sam.12:23), and “paradise” in his reply to the penitent thief on the cross (Lk.23:43). The reason for this temporary separation (albeit in a place of blessing) was the prior requirement that sinful Man be redeemed before entering into the presence of God (a promise in which these Old Testament believers had put their faith, but one which would not be fulfilled historically until the cross). That is why, after the expulsion from Eden of Adam and Eve, God stationed His cherubs at the entrance to the garden, namely, to deny mankind access to the tree of life when sin made further direct communion with Him impossible without prior redemption from that sin (Gen.3:24). There could thus be no admittance to direct fellowship with God, before or after death, until Christ should pay in full with His precious blood the redemption price of sinful mankind (Heb.1:3), and thereby win access for us once more into the presence of the Father (Rom.5:2; Heb.10:19-22; 1Pet.3:18).

Hades: The abode of the Old Testament dead is often referred to by its Hebrew name *sheol*, *lvaw* (New Testament “Hades”), alternatively translated in the English versions as “hell” or “the grave” (cf. 1Sam.2:6; 28:15; 1Kng.2:6; Job 11:8; Ps.139:8; Is.7:11). As Luke 16:19-31 indicates, *sheol* (hell or Hades) is composed of several compartments:

1) the place of the saved (Abraham's Bosom or paradise, the place of blessing where Lazarus and company resided before Christ's ascension, and where our Lord assured the penitent thief that he would be with Him immediately after death: Lk.23:43).

²² cf. 2Chron.20:16; Nimrod, son of *Cush*, operates in Babylonia, not Ethiopia. See “The Rivers of Paradise,” by E.A. Speiser, in *Festschrift Johannes Friedrich* (Heidelberg 1958) 473-485.

2) the place of the unsaved (*sheol* proper, or “torments” where the rich man finds himself).

3) the Abyss (not in the parable but elsewhere in Luke), the place where certain of the fallen angels are presently incarcerated (Lk.8:31; 2Pet.2:4; Jude 6; Rev.9:1-11; 20:1-3).²³

It is to this interim Eden that Jesus refers when on the cross He tells the believing thief “today you will be with Me *in paradise*” (cf. Lk.23:43; our Lord’s proclamation to the angels imprisoned in the Abyss, part of His descent into *sheol* or “hell”, referred to at 1Pet.3:19). While hell proper and the Abyss hold fast their inhabitants even today, the blessed occupants of Abraham’s Bosom were brought to heaven to be with our Lord in the wake of His ascension to the Father (compare Ps.68:18 and Eph.4:8-10 with Jn.12:26 etc.; see also Part 5 of the present series).

e) The Present Third Heaven: Deceased believers currently reside in the third heaven, the paradise, as we have seen, referred to in 2nd Corinthians 12:4. This “heaven” is the place of the Father’s throne, and is also called the “heaven of the heavens” or “highest heavens” (Deut.10:14; Ps.148:4; cf. Eph.4:10). Its location and character are the same as the interim third heaven (treated above under point b.), with the important exception that it now serves as paradise for all who die in the Lord since His ascension to the Father’s right hand. First and foremost, we can take great comfort in the fact that our destiny in the next life is inextricably linked to that of our Master, Jesus Christ. He has promised us unequivocally that we shall be where He is, which, at this present time, is at the Father’s right hand (Ps.110:1; Rom.8:34; Eph.1:21-22; Phil.2:9; Heb.1:3; 12:2; 1st Pet.3:22):

Whoever serves Me, must follow Me; where I am, *there My servant will be also*.
Whoever serves Me, My Father will honor.
John 12:26

Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe in God, and believe also in Me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house. If there weren’t, I would have told you. For I am going in order to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I shall come again and take you to Myself, *so that where I am, you may be also*.
John 14:1-3

Father, as to those You have given to Me, *I want them to be with Me* so that they may see the glory You have given to Me, because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.
John 17:24

²³ See Part 5 of this series for a complete discussion of Genesis chapter six and the reasons for this imprisonment of a portion of Satan’s angels.

And so we take heart, preferring to be away from the body *but at home with the Lord*.
2nd Corinthians 5:8

I am torn between the two [alternatives], *desiring to depart and to be with Christ*, for that [condition] is better by far.
Philippians 1:23

When we do depart this life to be with the Lord “we shall not be found naked”, that is, entirely disembodied, but a blessed habitation awaits us in the third heaven (2Cor.5:3; see the Greek text), an interim body to serve us until the time of our resurrection (see Peter #20 for details), one in which we shall be visible as the persons we have always been (Rev.6:9), one capable of speaking (Rev.6:10), of wearing clothing (Rev.6:11), of worshipping God (Rev.7:9-10), and of experiencing all the joy of communion and fellowship with Him and with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Rev.7:15-17). This joy is impossible for us to comprehend at present, but from the time of our transfer to the third heaven (probably, as in the case of Abraham’s Bosom, conveyed there by angels: cf. Lk.16:22), there shall be no more unhappiness of any kind, only the bliss of eternity in the presence of the Lord (Rev.7:15-17; 21:4).

f) The Millennial Jerusalem: When Christ returns at the 2nd Advent, He will establish His kingdom and rule the entire world from Jerusalem (e.g., Zech.8:3; 9:9; 14:9). As the capital of the Messianic Kingdom, Jerusalem will be the preeminent city on earth, even in a geographic sense, on the supernaturally elevated Mt. Zion (Is.2:2-3; 24:21-23; 52:2; Ezek.40:2; Mich.4:1; Zech.14:10). The conditions that will obtain in the millennial Jerusalem will make it a veritable Eden restored:

The Lord will have compassion on Zion, and compassion on all her ruins, and He will make her desert *like Eden*, and her wilderness *like the garden of the Lord*.
Isaiah 51:3

In that blessed “favorable season” to come (Is.61:2), the curse on the earth will be removed (Gen.3:17-19; 5:29; cf. Rom.8:19-23) and conditions similar to the garden restored (Acts 3:21). Comparable to the tree of life of Gen.2:9, and to the “tree(s) of life” in the final New Jerusalem (Rev.22:2), the millennial, Edenic Jerusalem will also be provided with trees that share the same purpose of imparting spiritual as well as physical blessing (cf. Is.41:19; 55:12-13; Ezek.34:27; 36:8; Rev.22:2):

And on the bank of the river gorge on both sides will spring up every sort of food-producing tree. Their foliage will not wither, nor their produce fail, but every month they will yield a new crop, for they will be irrigated by the waters flowing from the sanctuary; their produce will serve as food and their foliage as medicine.
Ezekiel 47:12

And it is not only in the tree of life that the millennial Jerusalem will resemble Edens past and present, for the river on whose banks the trees described above will flourish will share important

qualities with the rivers of Genesis chapter two and with the “river of the water of life” of Revelation chapter twenty-two:

1) a central source: Just as water flowed out of the garden of Eden, so the millennial river of living water will rise from a fountainhead at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem (Ezek.47:1-12; Joel 3:18; Zech.14:8), a very similar scene to that of the river of the water of life in Rev.22:1-2.

2) a fertile effect: The river is associated with agricultural fecundity and abundant fisheries in Ezekiel 47:1-12, while Joel 3:18 connects the fountain with the blossoming of the land in general (cf. a similar symbolic reference in Is.66:12: “I will extend peace to her like a river and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream”).

3) a life-giving influence: The river is one of “living water” in Zechariah 14:8, a title which, in light of Revelation 22:17, suggests the spiritual blessings it will confer (see also Jer.2:13; Is.55:1).

The Kingdom of Heaven as it will be set up by Christ following His 2nd Advent presents a unique situation in its capacity as the sixth Eden, for, unlike the garden of Adam and Eve or the final paradise, New Jerusalem, it (and the rejuvenated earth) will be home to a mixed population that will include individuals both imperfect (people of various spiritual states still in their natural bodies) and perfect (resurrected believers). The righteous rule of Christ (Ps.2:9) will suppress the effects of the sin nature so pronounced in our experience (e.g., crime and war), and the result will be a veritable heaven on earth, an environment as perfect as possible (given the limitation that it will contain imperfect human beings), a world overflowing with blessing in its sights and sounds, its prosperity, and in the physical and spiritual wholeness, flowing forth from Jerusalem:

Beauty of the Rejuvenated Earth:

The wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the calf with the lion and the fatling together, with a little boy leading them.
Isaiah 11:6

Your eyes will gaze upon the King in His beauty, and you will see the land expanding out [before you].
Isaiah 33:17

The desert and arid land will rejoice, and the wilderness will exult and burst into bloom like a crocus.
Isaiah 35:1

I will make rivers spring forth on the barren heights, and fountains in the valleys. I will fill the desert with pools of water, and the arid places with springs of water.
Isaiah 41:18

The mountains and hills will let out a cheer and the trees will clap their hands. Instead of thorns, cypress will grow, and instead of thistles, myrtles.

Isaiah 55:12

Prosperity and Happiness:

Enlarge the place for your tent. Let your tent curtains stretch wide and don't hold back. Lengthen your ropes and strengthen your stakes. For you will burst forth on the right and on the left. Your offspring will possess the nations, and the deserted cities will be inhabited.

Isaiah 54:2-3

Your gates will be open always, day and night they will not be closed, so that the wealth of the nations may be brought to you, and their kings led before you.

Isaiah 60:11

You will feast on the wealth of the nations, and boast in their riches.

Isaiah 61:6

I am about to extend prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing torrent.

Isaiah 66:12

Raise a joyous shout, Daughter of Zion. Shout for joy, Israel. Be happy and exult with all your heart, Daughter of Jerusalem.

Zephaniah 3:14

For there will be prosperity for what is sown: the vine will yield its fruit, and the land will bring forth its produce, and the sky will give forth the [necessary] moisture.

Zechariah 8:12

The wealth of all the nations round about will be gathered up, their gold and silver and clothing in abundance.

Zechariah 14:14

Physical and Spiritual Wholeness:

The mountains will bring forth prosperity for the people, and the hills righteousness.

Psalms 72:3

“Come let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us of His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.”

Isaiah 2:3

And the Lord will create over Mount Zion and over all her assemblies a cloud – one of smoke by day, and of a shining flame of fire by night. For there will be a canopy above the glory [of His presence, covering it] entirely. It will be a shelter from the heat by day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

Isaiah 4:5-6

To His dominion and its prosperity there will be no limit or end. He will establish it and lay its foundation on David's throne and over his kingdom, in justice and righteousness, now and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9:7

You will joyously draw water from the fountains of salvation.

Isaiah 12:3

Justice will dwell in the desert, and righteousness in the cultivated fields.

Isaiah 32:16

I will rejoice over Jerusalem and be filled with joy for My people. The sound of weeping and the cry of distress will no longer be heard in her. No longer will there be there any infant that perishes in his youth, nor any old man who fails to live out his days in full. For a man will be accounted but a youth, should he die at a hundred, even the sinner a hundred years old who suffers this curse.

Isaiah 65:19-20

The Lord their God will deliver them on that day (for His people are to Him as a precious flock, like jewels in a crown set prominently in His land). For how fair and beautiful they will be. Grain will make the young men flourish and new wine the young women.

Zechariah 9:16-17

In that day a fountain will flow for the house of David, [to cleanse] from sin and impurity.

Zechariah 13:1

The Most Profound Blessing of All: The Presence and Personal Rule of Jesus Christ (see also Ps.2; 45; 48; 72; Is.2:1-5; Ezek.48:35; Dan.7:14; Zech.14; Lk.1:32; Rev.19:11-20:6):

For a child is born to us, and a Son is given to us. Dominion shall rest on his shoulder, and His name will be called "He whose counsel is wondrous", "Mighty God", "the Father of Eternity", "the Prince of Prosperity".

Isaiah 9:6

In those days and at that time, I will make a Branch of righteousness sprout forth for David, and He will accomplish justice and righteousness on the earth.

Jeremiah 33:15

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, too small to be numbered among the clans of Judah, from you I will bring forth the One who is to rule over Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, even from the days of eternity.

Micah 5:2

Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem will be called “the City of Truth”, and “the Mountain of the Lord, the Mountain of Holiness”.

Zechariah 8:3

Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion. Shout [for joy], daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your King will come to you. Righteous and victorious He is; humble and riding on a donkey, even on a colt, a donkey’s foal.

Zechariah 9:9

And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be the only One and His name the only name.

Zechariah 14:9

g) The New Jerusalem: Most of what we know about the ultimate, eternal state, the last Eden, is from the book of Revelation (chapters 21 & 22). But the new heavens and the new earth, the location of the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:1-2), are well known throughout scripture. In contrast to the new heavens and the new earth, the biblical principle of the transience of human life (e.g. Is.40:6-8) applies with equal force to the present “old” world in which we now live:

For this world in its present form is passing away.

1st Corinthians 7:31 (NIV)

The world and its lust are passing away.

1st John 2:17

Satan’s rebellion, the fall of Man, and the sin which has marred all of human history (and which was judged in Christ on the cross) has made necessary the complete destruction of universe in which we now dwell (Ps.102:25-27; Is.34:4; 51:6; Hag.2:6; Matt.24:35; Heb.1:11-12; 12:26-29; 2Pet.3:10-13; Rev.20:11). For our eternal abode, where we will be with God forever, He has in mind a place where there is no longer the slightest taint of sin or rebellion, where only righteousness dwells, that is, the Father’s kingdom, the “new heavens and new earth” (cf. Is.65:17; 66:22; 1Cor.15:24):

And the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire by that same word (of God), preserved for the day of judgment and the destruction of godless men. Let not this one fact escape your attention then, beloved, namely that one day is like a thousand years in the Lord’s eyes, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not delaying in the

fulfillment of His promise (as some think); rather He is exercising patience for your sake, being unwilling for anyone to perish, but desiring all instead to come to repentance. For the day of the Lord will come like a thief, a day in which the heavens will depart with a roar, the very elements will ignite and dissolve, and the earth and everything which has been done upon it will be laid bare [for the Lord's inspection]. Since all these things are destined to disintegrate in this way, [consider] what sort of [Christians] we ought to be, [devoted to] holy and godly conduct, as we wait with eager expectation and apprehension the advent of the day of God. For on that day the heavens will burst into flame and dissolve, and the elements will catch fire and melt. But we are awaiting **new heavens and a new earth** just as He promised - [a world] where righteousness dwells.

2nd Peter 3:7-13

It is significant to note that this ultimate paradise will not be "in heaven", but on the new earth, when the New Jerusalem descends from heaven (Rev.21:10). As creatures created to dwell on the earth, it makes perfect sense that earth, not heaven, should be our final home. And as the original Eden was on earth, a place where God communed with the angels until sin entered the picture through Satan's fall and rebellion, it should also come as no surprise that the Father Himself will reside with us in the ultimate paradise (Rev.22:3).²⁴ The New Jerusalem will be a true paradise in every sense of the word (Rev.2:7). It will contain the tree of life (Rev.2:7; 22:2), and the river of the water of life (Rev.22:1 & 17). God will be present there in person and we will enjoy fellowship with Him (Rev.21:3; 22:3). Finally, this ultimate Eden will be a place of exquisite beauty (Rev.21:9ff.), where the pain and suffering of this life will be a distant memory (Rev.21:4). In this way, everything will come full circle for humanity. Having lost paradise in the first instance, because of the sacrifice of Christ and the grace of God we are destined to reclaim it in the end; and, as is frequently the case where the wisdom, grace and majesty of God are concerned, what we will have in the end will be far better than Adam and Eve had in the beginning: a glorious New Jerusalem which will far outshine the glories of the garden, and an eternity of perfect communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in our new, perfect bodies, with no further possibility of sin.

h) Our Own Personal Eden: Tribulation we will have as long as we live on this present earth, under Satan's sway (Jn.16:33). But as believers in Jesus Christ, we can – in spite of pain and privation – begin to enjoy the most important benefit of paradise here and now, that is, communion and fellowship with our God. The Holy Spirit is like the river of life springing up within us, our pledge of eternal life (Jn.7:37-39; cf. Jn.4:14; Is.55:1). Our Lord Jesus Christ is within us too (Jn.14:20; Rom.8:10; 2Cor.13:5; Eph.3:17; Col.1:27). He is well known to us as the Branch (e.g., Jer.23:5), and the true vine in whom we bear fruit (Jn.15:1–8; cf. Rom.11:16-24; see also Ps.1:3; 52:8); He sacrificed Himself for us on a tree (1Pet.2:24), that we might forever enjoy the right to the tree of life (Rev.2:7). And we have been promised by Him that if we love and obey Him, the Father too will fellowship with us (Jn.14:23). So that even on this

²⁴ On the advent of the Trinity, see Part 6 of Coming Tribulation, section VII.3, "The Advent of the Father".

sinful earth, our bodies, imperfect as they are at this present time, are temples of the living God (1Cor.3:16-17; 6:19; 2Cor.6:16; Eph.2:21-22; 1Pet.2:5), with whom we are always free to enjoy communion, the greatest blessing of paradise right here in the midst of the devil's world (cf. Ps.36:7-9; 46:4):

Happy is the man who does not walk in the path of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. His delight, instead, is in the law of the Lord, and he meditates on His law day and night. He will be like *a tree planted where the waters divide, which will yield its fruit in its season, and whose leaf will not wither.*

Psalm 1:1-3 (cf. Jn.15:1-6)

III. Satan's Original Status:

We return now to the original paradise, that primordial angelic Eden, to a time before Satan had rebelled from God and had fallen from his privileged status. What we know about Satan in his pristine state comes mainly from the testimony of Isaiah (chapter fourteen) and Ezekiel (chapter twenty-eight).²⁵ When we consider in some detail the information contained in these two chapters, we can arrive at a rather vivid picture of Satan's situation before he rejected God. In anticipation of the points about to be covered, suffice it to say that the devil was the preeminent creature in the universe before his fall, and each of the various characteristics described below call attention to specific aspects of this preeminence. Satan is described by these two prophets as: a) the "morning star" and "son of the dawn"; b) one who sealed up perfection; c) full of wisdom; d) exemplifying beauty; e) in Eden; f) adorned with precious stones; g) equipped with timbrels and pipes; h) anointed; i) a cherub; j) one who "covers"; k) on the holy mountain of God; l) walking amidst the "stones of fire":

a) Morning Star (Is.14:12): This title speaks of Satan's role in reflecting the glory of God (cf. Job 38:7, where all the elect angels are described as "stars of the morning"). The Hebrew *helel* (llyh, literally, "shining one"), was translated in the Greek Old Testament as "light bearer" and by the Latin Vulgate as "Lucifer". "Morning star" (or "day star") is an apt rendering of this title, for it betokens a heavenly body so brilliant that it can be seen even in daylight. As the prime creature of the primordial Eden, a place without darkness (for darkness did not exist before Satan's fall), Satan was the foremost representative of God's splendor, mirroring, for all angelic kind to behold, the brilliant glory of their Creator. It is a tragic irony that through his own choice he has now become the ruler of the domain of darkness (Eph.6:12; Col.1:13). Far from reflecting God's glory, he now opposes it in every way, but his ultimate destiny is to have his own light

²⁵ The majority view among conservative exegetes is that Is.14:4ff., the "taunt" against the king of Babylon, and Ezek.28:1ff., the prophecy against the king of Tyre, are primarily directed against Satan, and are to be interpreted in this sense. As Chafer points out in his *Systematic Theology*, v.2, p.46ff., many of the details of either passage could only apply to Satan ("you were in Eden", for example, would not be true of the literal king of Tyre in Ezek.28:13).

extinguished forever (Jude 6, 13). In contrast to Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ, the new Morning Star (2Pet.1:19; Rev.2:28; 22:16; cf. Num.24:17; Is.9:1-2; 42:6; 49:6; Matt.2:2; 2:9; 4:16; Lk.2:30-32; Jn.1:4-5; 8:12; 9:5), is the perfect reflection of the Father's glory (Heb.1:3).

b) Sealing Perfection (Ezek.28:12): "Sealing perfection [or proportion]" is a literal rendering from the Hebrew and can be expanded to the meaning "the one who puts his seal on harmonious-proportion" or, better, the "touchstone of symmetry" (that is, norms and standards of all kinds as seen from the divine point of view). That is to say, Satan, in his un-fallen state, could be looked to as one who upheld, embodied and represented perfect divine standards. It is a tragic irony that he is now the prime example of all that is wicked, wrong and anti-God. In contrast to Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ is the One who died to satisfy the Father's righteous standard regarding our sin (2Cor.5:21; 1Pet.2:24).

c) Filled with Wisdom (Ezek.28:12): This epithet is clear enough: Satan did not reject God out of ignorance. To the contrary, he was the wisest of God's creatures until he perverted that wisdom (Ezek.28:17). It is a tragic irony that Satan corrupted this wisdom and so became the "father of lies", the adversary of God's wisdom and truth (Jn.8:44). In contrast to Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ *is* the very wisdom of God (1Cor.1:24).

d) Exemplifying Beauty (Ezek.28:12): This phrase, also used of the beauty of Jerusalem at Lamentations 2:15, is often translated "perfect in beauty", but more precisely means "summing up" or "comprising the totality of beauty" (the Hebrew *chaliyl*, *lylk*, meaning an all embracing wholeness). As originally created, Satan was the very model of pulchritude, the most magnificent creature in the universe, demonstrating to all who viewed him the beauty of God that must lie behind such an exquisite act of creation. It is a tragic irony that through his rebellion he has become the author of and agent behind all the ugliness and abominations that infest this present world which is his realm, an infestation so repulsive that it will not be cleansed without a universal conflagration that completely destroys the devil's world (cf. 2Pet.3:10). In contrast to Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ will reign forever in the unparalleled beauty of the New Jerusalem (Rev.21-22).

e) In Eden (Ezek.28:13): As we saw above (section II, 6, a), this "Eden" is the pristine, original earth before its renewal in Genesis 1:3 and following. Though he was the premier creature in a utopian setting, Satan was not content. It is a tragic irony that through his rebellion he has exchanged a perfect environment for eternal residence in the lake of fire, and is leading his followers to share his fate (Matt.25:41). In contrast to Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ has prepared a place for us (Jn.14:1-4), a place whose wonders will outstrip even those of that first Eden (Rev.2:7).

f) Precious Stones (Ezek.28:13): The precious stones mentioned in this verse are indeed additional manifestations of Satan's beauty, but it is likely that they also mark him out as the one who represented the angels before God. The nine stones mentioned in this context bear a striking

similarity to those placed on the high priest's breastplate (Ex.28:17-21; 39:10-14).²⁶ In the Exodus context, each of the stones represented one of the twelve tribes of Israel and bore its name inscribed on the gem. Exodus 28:29 states that Aaron (i.e., the high priest) shall wear the breastplate with the stones inscribed with the twelve tribes "over his heart" whenever he enters the Holy Place "as a continual memorial before the Lord"; the verse also calls the breastplate so equipped "the breastplate of judgment". Each of Israel's tribes is thus a precious jewel in God's sight, and was represented before Him in this fashion whenever the high priest entered into the presence of God. Moreover, the breastplate also served the practical function of acting as a means of communication from the Lord in designating specific tribes for specific tasks.²⁷ What we see in Ezekiel's representation of a very similar apparatus on Satan, therefore, should be seen as fulfilling a similar function. As the "anointed cherub who covers" (see below), Satan would have been continually in the presence of the Lord as the prime representative of angelic kind in the same way that our Lord Jesus Christ (symbolically represented by Israel's high priest) has been continually in His presence as the "last Adam" (1Cor.15:45) and "*the* Son of Man" (e.g., Jn.9:35) since His ascension.²⁸ It is a tragic irony that Satan, who formerly represented his angelic brethren before the Lord would go on to corrupt many of them, thus leading them to eternal punishment (Matt.25:41). In contrast to Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ is our guide to eternal life (Heb.2:10; 12:2; *n.b.*, the Greek word *archegos* in these two verses is better rendered "leader" or "guide" than "author", as some of the versions have it), having paid the price of admission for us with His blood.

g) Tabrets and Pipes (Ezek.28:13): The KJV's rendering of these next two Hebrew words is, though archaic in terms of its vocabulary, essentially accurate (not so many more modern versions, including the NIV, which try to take these words as meaning settings and mountings for the jewels mentioned above). We may, if we wish, substitute "tambourines" and "flutes", but the essential meaning is the same: from the day of his creation, Satan was endowed

²⁶ The identification, order, symbolism and significance of these jewels is discussed in detail in Part 4 of this series (section III.3.a.1).

²⁷ The order of jewels on the breastplate was used when seeking the Lord's guidance (cf. Num.27:21; Judg.1:1-2). These almost certainly followed the order of military march (Num.2), since divine selection of tribes was ostensibly for military purposes, and since a list that excludes Levi, but gives Ephraim and Manasseh separate representation would be necessary for such purposes. See Part 4, section III.3.a.1.

²⁸ Positing a nine-fold of angelic kind has, therefore, much to recommend it, especially given the close parallel between the high priest's breastplate and the jewels adorning Satan. This is all the more true in light of what would be a very similar function of memorial and selection of the human and angelic divisions by their respective representatives. It is also worth noting that a similar division (still unrevealed in its specific application) may obtain for the Church, for the wall of the New Jerusalem also has twelve foundation gem-stones which are inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles of Christ (Rev.21:14; 19-20).

with a golden musical apparatus, instruments of percussion and wind, that made him uniquely qualified to sing the praises of God. It is a tragic irony that Satan, a creature specifically designed for praising God, should devote his existence to cursing Him instead, and suffer the consequence of being eternally cursed himself. In contrast to Satan, Christ became a curse for us (Gal.3:13; Rev.22:3), that we might exist for the praise and glory of God (Eph.1:6; 1:12; 1:14).

h) Anointed (Ezek.28:14): The word translated here as “anointed” (*mimshach*) and the word for Messiah (*meshiach*) come from the same Hebrew root (*xwm*, *mashach*) and are very close in meaning. Both indicate “to be consecrated through the process of anointing”. In ancient Israel, it was the custom to anoint with oil both priests (Ex.28:41), and monarchs (1Sam.10:1; 16:1 & 13) at the inception of their offices. Such anointing marks God’s choice of the individual in question, and is symbolic of His power and support. The oil of anointment itself represents the Holy Spirit (cf. 1Sam.6:13), whose guidance, encouragement and enlightenment would be especially important for those commissioned by the Lord for spiritual or temporal governance (i.e., Ps.51:11). This appears to be the meaning in our context. Satan was not anointed with a literal oil, but was given a special measure of the Holy Spirit to aid him in his capacity of supreme angelic being. This anointing marked him out as God’s number one creature. It is a tragic irony that Satan, having been thus commissioned into such a unique position of trust, giving him such an incomparable opportunity for fellowship with and assistance from God, should betray that trust and reject Him entirely, only to seek his own aggrandizement. In contrast to Satan, Christ (whose name means “anointed one”) accepted the Father’s commission without reservation, humbling Himself to the point of death on the cross for our sakes, that we might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for faithful service to the true Messiah.

i) Cherub (Ezek.28:14): There is a considerable difference between the image conjured up by the word “cherub” in our culture and the creatures designated by the biblical word *cherubh* (*bvrk*). Biblically speaking, cherubs are among the highest ranking and most privileged of the angels, for they are blessed with extraordinary access to the presence of the Lord. What we know of Satan’s unique, pre-fall status as a cherub is to be garnered from the description of the cherubs who replaced him (described elsewhere in scripture).²⁹ Cherubs take the lead in worshiping God (Is.6; Rev.4:8b; 5:8 & 14; 7:11-12; 19:4), act as intermediaries for God in His regal manifestations (Rev.6:1-7; 15:7), and, perhaps most significantly, control access into His presence and fellowship (a duty most strikingly evident from their guarding of the “way to the tree of life” after Man’s expulsion from the garden: Gen.3:24). Not surprisingly, therefore, the cherubs are usually seen in close connection with the throne of God, that is, as we have seen above, His mobile “chariot-throne” (represented by the “mercy-seat” above the ark of the covenant; cf. Ex.25:17-20). God sits “enthroned” between the cherubs (Ps.80:1), and it is there “between the cherubim” that He met with Moses (Ex.25:22). The seraphim of Isaiah chapter six, and the “living creatures” of Revelation (especially Rev.4:6ff.) are representations of these same creatures. In all of these instances, the creatures depicted are multi-winged angels, closely

²⁹ The word “cherubim” is the transliterated Hebrew plural of the word cherub, “-iym” being the standard masculine plural suffix.

associated with God's throne, engaged in worshiping Him as they shield (and sometimes propel) His chariot throne. Though some would make the living creatures and seraphs separate orders of angelic beings, it is more likely (given their identical functions and similar descriptions) that these additional names are merely alternate designations for this highest angelic rank. For instance, the living creatures, whose multiple faces bear an undeniable similarity to the cherubs of Ezekiel, praise God with the refrain "holy, holy, holy" in the exact manner of the seraphs of Isaiah (Is.6:3; Rev.4:8b). The Hebrew word *seraph* ([rs]) means "burning ones" and this designation matches well the description of Ezekiel who notes that "the appearance of the creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches" (Ezek.1:13; for this fire imagery compare Deut.4:24; Ps.104:4; Ezek.1:4; 10:2; 28:14; Rev.4:2-6).³⁰ These unique angels, then, guard the throne of God, protecting His holiness against all that is profane, controlling access to His presence (compare their depiction on the veil that guarded the holy of holies of the tabernacle: Ex.26:1, 31). It is a tragic irony that Satan, having once been entrusted with this guardianship of God's holiness, should now, by his own treachery, be fated to an eternal existence shut off from the presence of God, seeking in the meantime to deny mankind access to the Father which was once his special prerogative. In contrast to Satan, Christ by His loyal fulfillment of the Father's plan in sacrificing Himself for us has gained for us access into the holy place, past the cherubim, and into the presence of the Father (Rom.5:2; Eph.2:18; 3:12).

j) He Who Covers (Ezek.28:14): The primary reference for this passage is Exodus 25:20, where the cherubs who stand above the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant (the representation of God's throne) are said to spread their wings and "cover" the seat (the same Hebrew verb, *sachach*, being used in both contexts). This same verb is also used of the veil "covering" the holy of holies (Ex.40:3; 21). The main idea here is one of "shielding" or "protecting" as can be seen from the use of the word in the Psalms (e.g, Ps.5:11; 91:4; 140:7). Satan's original position can thus be described as that of the ultimate "imperial guard", charged with warding off all that is profane from the exquisite holiness of God (the function now, as we have seen, of numerous cherubs). It is a tragic irony that Satan's position as a bulwark against the profane has been altered by his own rebellion into that of a promoter of all that is detestable to God's holiness. In contrast to Satan, Christ kept Himself completely chaste from sin, so that in fulfillment of the Father's plan He might "become sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2Cor.5:21).

k) On the Holy Mountain of God (Ezek.28:14): This is a reference to the perfect, original earth (see section II.6.a above). Satan's place in the pristine perfection of God's original creation was compromised by his rebellion and he has thus exchanged this blessed habitation for the ultimate condemnation of the lake of fire (Rev.21:10). In contrast to Satan, Christ, by enduring the condemnation of the cross on our behalf, has opened the way into the true holy of holies for

³⁰ The description of their location is similar as well: the living creatures are "in the center of the throne around the throne" (Rev.4:6b), that is, at the four corners of and intimately connected with the throne; the cherubim are "within it [the throne]" (Ezek.1:4); the seraphs are "above" the [stationary] earthly throne in Isaiah chapter six.

us, that is, into the presence of the Father, and has thus forever vouchsafed our place in the ultimate restored paradise (Heb.6:19-20).

1) Walking Amidst the Stones of Fire (Ezek.28:14 & 16): Mentioned only here in scripture, the “stones of fire” would appear to be memorial stones, along the lines of the gems on the high priest’s breastplate (see section III.f above). But in contrast to the collective reference of the gems on the breastplate (as with the gems worn by Satan), these “stones of fire” seem rather to represent the remembrance of individual angelic beings before the Lord. We see parallels for this function in the foundation jewels of the New Jerusalem (one for each apostle: Rev.21:14-21), and in the “white stone” that is given to everyone who “overcomes”: a name is written on this stone “which no one knows save he who receives [it]” (Rev.2:17). The fact that the very memory of Satan will be obliterated (i.e., “I will destroy you from the midst of the stones of fire” in v.16; cf. the use of *’abhadh* here and in Deut.12:3 & Is.26:14) argues for this interpretation as well. The stones, then, would serve, for angels, a purpose similar to that of the “book of life” for believers (cf. Ex.32:32; Dan.12:1; Lk.10:20; Rev.20:15). That these stones should be “fiery” is perfectly understandable when we consider the natural affinity of angels with fire as described elsewhere in scripture (Ps.104:4; Is.6:6; Ezek.10:2). It is a tragic irony that Satan should abandon his special place amidst these memorials to the Lord’s personal remembrance of every holy angel and embark instead on a mission of alienating from God as many angels and men as he could. In contrast to Satan, Christ offered Himself as a memorial before the Father to bring to repentance and salvation to all of mankind (Eph.5:2).

Conclusion: Satan was the top-ranking angelic creature, blessed with extraordinary offices and privileges which were never to be paralleled again (except in the person of Christ). His preeminent status begs the question of why he would jeopardize (let alone renounce) such an exalted status. The sad truth is that all these benefits and blessings were not enough for Satan. He wanted more, wanted the only thing with which he had not been entrusted: rulership of the universe. It was not enough for him to be guardian of the throne of God; he wanted to occupy it as well.

IV. Satan’s Character, Sin and Fall:

1) Satan’s Character: As Ezekiel 28:15 states in unequivocal terms, Satan was created “blameless”. This is a critical piece of information, because through this scripture we are assured that his decision to sin was not some inevitable action originating with God, but was instead a free-will decision on Satan’s part. Satan was created without sin, and with no necessity to sin. He and he alone is the one who bears the complete responsibility for all the trouble he has brought upon his fellow angels, upon humanity, and upon himself. God bears none of the blame for Satan’s fall. Satan took the opportunity of using the free will God gave him to reject God and follow instead the path of evil.

As is the case with all of us, Satan's decision to eschew God and all that is good and true, meant that he would necessarily follow the path of evil and of the lie. Make no mistake – there is no middle ground. Ultimately, no one is entirely independent in his actions. We only choose the master we will serve, be it good or evil, the truth or the lie, God or Satan. Thus the issue of choice which confronts human beings today is in its essence the same as the one which confronted Satan before human history ever commenced. Like that primeval super-creature, we too must choose whether we will follow God, accepting the truth He has made available to us, or reject Him, accepting instead the devil's lies.

The issue of choice in Satan's case is of the utmost importance (as indeed it is with every one of God's moral creatures). Satan had to be given the chance of rejecting God and His truth just as Adam and Eve were, just as you and I are. Without the opportunity of rejecting truth in a tangible and meaningful way, there would be no genuine choice, no true free will. A situation where His creatures praise Him and follow Him simply because there is no other option is clearly not what God desires or intends. The essential free will God has provided to His creatures is inextricably bound up with the choice of accepting or rejecting Him, but the choice is real and legitimate nonetheless. According to any other scenario, we would be little more than robots, and morally indistinct from the animals.

God's provision of free will to His creatures has not been effected without stupendous cost. Endowed with the option of rejecting Him, all too many angels and humans have availed themselves of this dubious opportunity. And the loss is not ours alone: to redeem sinful mankind from the disastrous decisions of our first parents, God the Father would have to pay the ultimate price in the death of His own dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross. The ultimate victory, of course, will belong to God, as all will eventually acknowledge Him, whether from choice or from necessity (Is.45:23; Rom.3:19; 14:10; Phil.2:10).

Though originally blameless, Satan made the mistake of using his freedom to choose “freedom *from* God”. But such a prospect is wholly illusory: “freedom from God” means in truth only slavery, captivity to sin and death, and so to Satan (Heb.2:14-15 cf. Is.14:17; 61:1; Jn.8:34). For “to whatever you give your allegiance, to that you are enslaved” (Rm.6:16; cf. 2Pet.2:19). As L.S. Chafer has observed, the issue for us all is “independence from God” or “oneness with God”: as creatures we can never actually attain the former, but are free to choose the latter. Satan started with a pristine and blameless character, but in declaring his independence from God, he embraced the lie perforce, and became the very father of it (Jn.8:44).

2) Satan's Sin: In Paul's instructions to Timothy regarding the necessary qualifications of pastors, he concludes the section by warning that the candidate should not be a neophyte (i.e., one newly in the faith and spiritually immature). Otherwise, Paul says, the man might easily “become puffed up (i.e., blinded by arrogance) and so fall into [the same] condemnation as the devil [did]” (1Tim.3:6). In Paul's caveat here, pride, that is, an unwarranted sense of superiority, creates a breeding ground for further sin. This was certainly so in Satan's case. His exorbitant pride over the qualities and attributes given him by God (Ezek.28.17) led to further corrupt

thinking and plotting (Is.14:13-14; Ezek.28:17b), and finally to action: full scale rebellion against God. The substance of this corrupt thinking, a pattern of thought completely divorced from reality, especially given God's graceful generosity to him and the absolute folly of opposing the Creator, is recorded for us by Isaiah:

For you said in your heart, "I will ascend heavenward. I will set my throne above the stars of God. And I will take my seat on the mount of assembly on the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High God."
Isaiah 14:13-14

All five of these famous "I wills" of Satan speak to the same objective: replacing God's rule over the universe with his own. However, we can glean some specifics about Satan's intentions from each:

"I will ascend heavenward": Not "to heaven" as we have seen (see section II.6.a above). The primordial Eden, it will be remembered, was on earth. Furthermore, the "heights" of the mount of assembly were apparently dizzyingly high so as to make this expression quite apropos (see "above the heights of the clouds" immediately below, and compare the massive dimensions of the New Jerusalem, some fourteen hundred miles high: Rev.21:16).

"I will set my throne above the stars of God": These "stars" are the other angels, as we have seen (cf. Job 25:3; Ps.103:20-21; Is.40:26 c. Lk.2:13). There is no indication that Satan had any such throne. He was instead the cherub-guardian of God's throne, a throne which he sought to usurp. His current throne, or rulership of the world, will be held only temporarily (Lk.10:18; Jn.12:31).

"I will take my seat on the mount of assembly on the sides of the north": See 6a above for similarities between this description and Jerusalem. Here Satan imagines his moment of installation as supreme ruler in the place of God.

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds": As with "stars", "clouds" too has a double meaning, referring both to height *and* to the other angels (for clouds are often used to describe the assembled armies of God: Dan.7:13; Matt.26:64; 1Thes.4:17; Heb.12:1; Rev.1:7). This thought reprises the first "I will" and acts as a solemn asseveration of the plan contained in the first three "I wills". In non-poetic language it is equivalent to "Yes, I will indeed do this thing."

"I will be like the Most High God": This is the essence of Satan's plan and his desire, directly expressed without further equivocation. The statement, a prophetically inspired quote of Satan's actual thinking, removes any doubt about the fact that he was indeed aware of the consequences of his actions. Satan meant to replace God. As is so often the case in human experience, this pattern of thinking eventually led to action and to overt sin, thus bringing about Satan's rebellion and fall.

3) Satan's Fall: If chapter fourteen of the book of Isaiah describes the development and expression of Satan's mental state, culminating in his launching of a rebellion against God, Ezekiel chapter twenty-eight describes the process of putting his arrogant plan into practice, albeit in largely reverse order, tracing the matter backward at first from the result to the cause (vv.15-17), before more fully explicating the charge against Satan in verse eighteen. It will be helpful to translate and briefly analyze these verses in their order of occurrence before moving on to a full consideration of Satan's coup d'état, his revolutionary platform, and the scriptural names given to him which mark out his character for all to see, branding him as the deceiver and opponent of the Lord God Almighty he truly is.

Your *heart became haughty* because of your beauty, [and so] you *destroyed your wisdom* on account of your splendor. So I cast you to the earth, and I made a spectacle of you before kings.

Ezekiel 28:17

Arrogant pride, attributed specifically to Satan's high esteem for his own appearance, is at the root of the thought pattern whose course we saw Isaiah chronicle. Persistent and obsessive preoccupation with his own loveliness over time had a corrupting influence upon Satan's whole mental attitude, neutralizing, then effectively destroying his conscience, his character and his wholesome fear of God (cf. Eph.4:19; 1Tim.4:2). The judgments described in the second half of the verse are perfectly future, that is, it is a fate so certain (since it has been decreed by God) that it is described as already having happened. The first half of the judgment, being "cast to earth", will be carried out during the second half of the tribulation, the so-called "Great Tribulation" (Rev.12:7-13). The second half of the prophecy, becoming a "spectacle before kings", refers to Satan's final disposition into the lake of fire (Rev.20:10). Satan destroyed the wisdom God had given him and ungratefully rebelled against God, therefore God will destroy him. He who would be king shall be humbled before God's appointed royalty by the King of Kings (cf. Rev.21:24).

In your *extensive conspiring, you were filled with wickedness, and you sinned*. So I cast you from the mountain of God as one profaned, and I blotted out [your memory] from among the stones of fire, O covering cherub.

Ezekiel 28:16

Satan's conspiracy is first explicitly mentioned here, that is, his active attempt to carry out his plan of the five "I wills". The Hebrew word *rachal* (רָחַל), translated here as "conspiring", has the two-fold meaning of repetitive motion ("trading" or "trafficking") and of slandering. In the context of Satan's activities, it fits our notion of conspiracy quite well. Once arrogance had led to perverted thinking (v.17), these mental attitude sins blossomed into the overt activity of canvassing his fellow angels for support, slandering God in the process, an activity characterized by Ezekiel as "wickedness". Satan was attempting to besmirch God's reputation to gain adherents and further his own goals, but God here declares another fitting judgment on Satan: the future obliteration of any remembrance of him, let alone his reputation, and his physical expulsion from the place he feign would occupy as ruler of the universe.

In all your ways you were perfect from the day of your creation until unrighteousness was found in you.

Ezekiel 28:15

In the abundance of your iniquity, in the unrighteousness of your conspiring, you profaned the sacred places entrusted to you, so I made fire come out of your midst which devoured you, and I made you like the dust of the earth in the eyes of all who beheld you.

Ezekiel 28:18

These two verses, one at the head of this section, and the other at the end of it, both treat Satan's sin and fall in summary form. Verse fifteen takes a subjective viewpoint: Satan was made perfect – God is not to blame for his rejection of God. Nevertheless, by his own actions he became “unrighteous”, that is, unqualified for eternal contact and residence with God because of sin. Verse eighteen sums up from an objective viewpoint: Satan's conduct is described as “iniquity” (Hebrew *aven*,]vi, a strong word for egregious and presumptuous sin and the guilt it incurs); this activity is further described as a lack of righteousness here too but the word *avel* (lvi) is now applied not to Satan himself (as in verse fifteen), but to his deeds, namely, his conspiratorial actions. Once again, the future judgment is described as already having occurred, its eventuality being so certain as to be without doubt. Satan will actually be cast into the lake of fire following Christ's millennial reign (Rev.20:10). Entrusted with the guardianship of the innermost shrines of the Lord, Satan betrayed and polluted his trust, therefore God has decreed that Satan himself shall be desecrated, his pollution incinerated in eternal fire.

a) Satan's Coup d'État: As would-be usurper of God's throne, Satan found himself in a delicate position. When he conceived his nefarious ambition, he was on his own. Even in his unparalleled arrogance, he must have realized that he would need help if he were to be successful in his attempt to dethrone the Lord of the universe. Satan did have some advantages, however. As the preeminent and highest ranking angelic creature (not to mention the most impressive), Satan had considerable influence and authority over the other angels. None would be likely to rebel from the Lord instantaneously on Satan's say-so, but, with proper preparation, it might be possible to sway some of his fellows. Satan's plan was not to overthrow God by force (for such a course of action was a complete impossibility, as even Satan with his inflated sense of self saw clearly enough), but rather to effect a coup d'état: by winning over the allegiance of the angels, Satan thought to present God with a *fait accompli* which He would be powerless to reverse. For if the angels were to choose Satan over God, the devil seems to have felt secure that this fact in itself would protect him from divine retribution. This conclusion about Satan's thinking and strategy is, in fact, necessary, unless of course we are to assume that the devil really felt he could *overpower* God with a band of rebellious angels (and surely the wiles that the preeminent of all of God's creatures has demonstrated during our own human phase of history show clearly enough that Satan was smarter than that). But why should Satan feel secure from the wrath of an omnipotent God against whom he planned to rebel, simply because of some success on his part in seducing other angelic creatures into following his lead?

The answer to this difficult question lies in Satan's false perception of God's character. Satan realized, of course, that God had the *power* to crush him and his rebellion instantly and effortlessly. What Satan was counting on, however, was not that he would be able to oppose the omnipotence of God, but that God would be forced, by His own perfect integrity, to refrain from annihilating Satan and his followers. Even as the devil claims today that a truly loving God cannot punish His own creatures and still be consistent with His love,³¹ so in eternity past Satan outrageously staked the success of his traitorous ploy on God's own character. The universe at that time, populated as it was with its numerous angelic inhabitants, was a perfect, harmonious whole. Would God, *could* God really rend its fabric so drastically and unalterably by condemning Satan to destruction (along with the plethora of angels he was absolutely certain he could convince to follow him)? Satan must have reasoned that without some opportunity for reconciliation, and without some means of replacing what would be lost and thus restoring the perfect whole, his condemnation would be inconceivable because it would be completely inconsistent with the loving, fair, perfect God he knew. But neither of these two necessities would be possible. Reconciliation (and therefore restoration) would be impossible because 1) there would be no way to expiate treason against God, taken as it would be in complete knowledge and understanding of the implications, and 2) by their very nature as we have seen above (I, 3d), the angels who would choose for Satan would do so unalterably once and for all. Replacement also seemed to be an impossible option, inasmuch as angelic kind (as important and meaningful to God as everyone of us believers are: witness the memorial "stones of fire" as treated above) was created corporately and simultaneously: it would seem to have been inconsistent with God's character to begin a new round of partial creation to "patch up" and repair the damage done by the devil.³² No action God could take in response to the planned rebellion (at least as Satan summed up the situation) would redound to His glory. In the devil's reasoning, therefore, God would find Himself boxed in by the insurrection he was planning, and would be forced by His own perfection to leave Satan be as the universe's new de facto sovereign.

As delusional as Satan's thinking seems to us now (as we have reconstructed it here), the devil, originally the wisest of God's creatures, had a point. We can see, after all, from God's gracious handling of our own first parents' sin that reconciliation and restoration (and the replacement of a rebellious angelic element with an obedient human one) flow from the very core of who and what our God is. Indeed, none of this has been a mistake, or an afterthought, or a successful minor repair in our present universe – in all that has happened since the original creation of Genesis 1:1, the Lord's plan has proceeded apace in its perfect, inexorable way. Our creation, and the grace

³¹ The issue of how God's attributes work together in perfect harmony (without any compromise, as evil suggests must be necessary) is discussed in Part 1 of *Essential Doctrines of the Bible: Theology: the Study of God*.

³² On the issue of God's consistent and gracious attitude of filling up what is missing we may compare, for example, the case of the daughters of Zelophehad (Deut.25:5-6), as well as the principle of levirate marriage (Num.27:1-11; see also Gen.2:18).

God has shown to us in sending His only Son Jesus Christ to die for us and thus restore us (thereby replacing Satan and his legions) have *always* been central to His plan. For by saving us through His matchless grace and the gift of His Son, God has thoroughly exposed the devil's lie and gloriously proven His character for all the universe to see.

Satan's arrogance did not prevent him from making a largely correct assumption about the character of God, that He was just and fair. Yet Satan's arrogance blinded him to the obvious fact that no creature could ever anticipate what the Lord Almighty might do in justice and fairness. By creating mankind, and by offering us the choice of salvation through Christ, God is demonstrating to the angels this justice and fairness, as well as the boundless depths of His love: for all who would be reconciled, there is no limit consistent with His character to which He will not go to reconcile them – even to the point of giving His own Son over to death; for all who would remain alienated from Him, He is perfectly able and justified to find others who will choose for Him (and to pass judgment on those who will not). And this last point is more than replacement: the salvation of human beings and our wedding together to Jesus Christ who has Himself come to share our humanity constitutes a restoration of far more than what was originally lost. Oh the ineffable and unfathomable wisdom of our God, who heals what is broken into something stronger, and replaces what was lost with something better! For in the new heavens and new earth where we shall all dwell with Him forever, the blessings which once were will be multiplied beyond our comprehension because of God's boundless love for us His faithful creatures in Jesus Christ His Son.

It is evident from the events that followed the conception of his plan that Satan was indeed able to bring a large proportion of angels over to his way of thinking about God's probable reaction to any such coup d'état (an appropriate name for an overthrow of authority based not upon a contest of relative force, but rather political intrigue). For before any of the angels followed him, they would need to be convinced of the prospects of success: had they instead been certain of swift and immediate retribution from the Lord Almighty, it is fair to ask how many would have voluntarily enlisted into Satan's cause. There had to be something more, however. Satan's own motive of universal rulership is clear enough, but his potential followers would have to be wooed. Paradise, after all, could not have been so terrible as to force them into a rebellion against God for its own sake, and the obvious fact that, in spite of Satan's assurances, at least *some* element of risk would be involved in betraying God could not have been lost on them. Satan needed a platform, one persuasive enough to convince his contemporaries to throw in their lot with him and take the risk of eternal condemnation.

b) Satan's Revolutionary Platform: It is apparently a condition common to angelic and human kind alike to want what we don't have, especially if we *cannot* have it. The original example of Adam and Eve vis-à-vis the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is sufficient evidence for this (not to mention the roughly six thousand years of human history since). Perhaps even more important than convincing his would-be followers that rebellion against God would be safe and meet with success was the necessity of a positive platform, a goal that could tempt his audience and incite their lust. But what do angels lack, and what could they possibly

want? They are not affected by the elements, as we are, not plagued by disease or the ravages of time, not in any need whatsoever that might incite the lust for acquisition that so inflames mankind. Yet it is precisely in that fact which liberates the angels from all the cares and concerns we humans feel so intensely that Satan found his chief selling point, the prime inducement to his fellow spirit-creatures to gamble their eternal futures and bind their fate to Satan's forevermore: the very fact that ***angels lack physical bodies***.

While we humans possess both a spiritual and a material part, angels, as we have seen, are primarily spiritual creatures (see I, 3c above). The absence of true corporeality (such as we possess) is in many respects a blessing (sparing the angels the pain, suffering and tears which are the common heritage of mankind since the fall), but it seems to have left many of the angels wondering what might have been. For while human beings had not yet been created when Satan launched his campaign to unseat God, it will be remembered that the original paradise from which Satan and his followers fell was on earth (see II, 6a above). And though this is neither the time nor the place to discuss the fossil record that has been such a stumbling block over the years to pure biblical faith, we can at least observe that much of that record no doubt hearkens back to the era we are presently discussing. For the pristine, original earth, though not described in scripture, is unlikely to have been a barren desert. God creates only perfection (cf. Is.45:18). In the absence of other information, we would do well to assume that this original paradise was a wonder to behold in every way, fully furnished with all types of vegetation and, most significant for our present study, an entire complement of animated (if not morally responsible) creatures as well. We can expect that such an order of creation would have piqued angelic interest. For though angels can affect material, they cannot have the rich experience of the material that creatures who are both material and spiritual can have. Without possessing a body, it is impossible to experience the sensual life of the body.

Now from everything we know about the angels from scripture, possession on their part of the bodies of animals and of humans is contrary to the will and the law of God in every way. Satan observed the curiosity and interest of his fellows and applied the universal principle of sinful motivation treated above: they didn't have bodies and, moreover, were forbidden to possess the bodies of other creatures; therefore they *wanted* them, wanted to experience first hand the sensual, corporeal life "that had been denied them" (according to satanic propaganda). Clearly, God was not going to stand by and allow a wave of possessions contrary to His commands (much less any program of breeding and genetic manipulation that may be evidenced by the hominid portion of the fossil record: see Part 2 of this series). The only way to "escape" the rather pure spirituality God had "inflicted" on them was to fall in behind a new leader and take what they wanted in defiance of God.

In the event, God rained down complete destruction on the world of that time (as we shall see in Part 2), but it is interesting to note that there are a number of biblical passages which demonstrate that the lust of Satan's followers for bodies which most approximate their own essential shape is still very much alive:

1. Angels have no strictly material bodies of their own: Without taking possession of the bodies of other creatures, angels are unable to fully experience the material world in any sensual way (see II, 3b above). Paul's list of "bodies" in 1st Corinthians chapter fifteen mentions "heavenly bodies", but by this he clearly means the planets. Significantly, he does not mention angels. We have also seen above many passages that stress the spiritual (and hence non-material) nature of angels (Heb.1:7; 1:14; 2:14-16 [esp. v.16]). This radical difference from human (and animal) kind helps to explain how it is that angels can occasionally be called "gods" (i.e., having more in common with the spirituality of God than the materiality of Man: Ps.8:5; 82:1 & 6). Angels are not "flesh and blood" as we, in our material part, clearly are (Eph.6:12). When our Lord appeared to His disciples and was taken for a ghost, He commanded them to "touch Me and see that a spirit (*pneuma*) does not have flesh and bones as you see Me having" (Lk.24:39). The word He used, the Greek *pneuma* (πνεῦμα), is the same word used for angels wherever they are deemed "spirits" (e.g., Heb.1:7 & 14). No stronger confirmation could be asked to show that angels are different from us in this main, crucial point of corporeality (and, therefore, in the enjoyment of all that is sensual).

2. The Serpent of Genesis 3: It is no accident (and by now should come as no great surprise) that when we first encounter Satan in scripture, he has taken possession of a material creature, the serpent. We can assume from the context that this especially "subtle" creature was Eve's special pet, and a perfect vehicle for the devil's seduction. Given the nature of the prehistoric fossil record, we might well wonder whether his choice of the serpent is also due in part to an earlier angelic fascination with reptiles (see part 2 of this series). But was his possession of the creature necessary to accomplish his goal (any more than his possession of Judas was: cf. Lk.22:3)? What we can say is that possession of the bodies of material creatures is part of Satan's normal *modus operandi*, and indicates that this is more than something the fallen angels "have to do" to accomplish their nefarious purposes. Rather, it is something they dearly *desire* to do.

3. The Angelic Infiltration of Genesis 6: As both Jude 6 and 2nd Peter 2:4 make clear, "the sons of God coming in to [mate with] the daughters of men" was a Satanic attack of immense proportions which violated God's ground rules for the resolution of the angelic rebellion in human history (see part 5 of this series where the Gen.6 attack is treated in detail). The direct mixing of angelic and human seed is clear-cut proof of the desire on the part of Satan and his followers to attain the (for them) unattainable: corporeality.

4. The Legion of Demons and the Swine: In Mark chapter 5, when Jesus cast the demon legion from a single man, these fallen spirits "begged" Him to "send us among the pigs; allow us to *go into them*" (v.12). There is very little to explain their motivation for this request until we accept that these satanic angels, being deprived of their human home, were desperate to regain *some* material adobe, be it ever so mean.

5. The Wandering Spirit (Lk.11:24-26): The return of the "wandering spirit" to the man he had previously possessed is a likewise telling case that only fully makes sense when we take into

account the “addiction” the fallen angels have to the corporeality which, as part of our nature, we understandably take for granted. The demon goes through desolate places seeking “rest” (i.e., another willing subject to inhabit), but when it is disappointed in this hope, it returns to its “house” (Greek *oikos*). The terminology used here is significant, for in 2nd Corinthians 5:2, Paul calls our coming resurrection body, the super-material home in which we shall spend all eternity with the Lord, a “dear-house from on high” (Greek *oiketerion*, the diminutive of the very word used for house above being used in a [grammatically] familiar sense). *Our* material abodes, the bodies that house our spirits now and then, are given to us by God, but it is the devil’s plan, and his prime inducement to his followers, to take by force the homes that properly belong to others.

Satan’s false gospel to the angels who fell in with him was one of “deliverance” from their non-sensual state. He found them curious about the experience of material existence, and inflamed this curiosity into outright lust and rebellion, so that they became obsessed with the possession of material bodies, and addicted to the experience (in the same way that many of our fellow human beings are destroyed by drugs). Therefore, the widespread and dishonest trade of Ezekiel 28:16 & 18 is better translated “canvassing” or “campaigning”. Satan found his issue and seduced a large part of angelic kind with it. In this his activity is quite similar to that of Absalom in his conspiracy to overthrow his father David, the rightful king. We are told that Absalom used to get up early in the morning and go out to greet all who came to Jerusalem for adjudication, praising whatever case they might have (regardless of the justice of it) and swearing justice for all, if only he were to be made “judge” (2Sam.15:2-6). By flattery and such false promises, Absalom “stole the hearts of the people away” in very much the same fashion that Satan must have done. The temptation to follow such an attractive leader who was promising them so much (and the assurance of the safety and success of their cause) proved more than many of the angels could resist.³³ Satan always strikes the weakest point in our defenses, and there is *always* a weak point. Adam and Eve had bodies, but no such vast knowledge as the angels possess, so Satan appealed to their desire for such; the angels had vast knowledge, but no material bodies, and that is where the devil chose to strike. Undoubtedly, the angels had no more real *need* for material bodies any more than our first parents did for “knowledge of good and evil”. Rather than to trust God for what is truly needed, however, it is an all too common creature reaction to decide for ourselves that what we do not presently have is absolutely essential, and to assume that somehow we are being “deprived by God” (though He is really only looking out for our best interests in keeping us from things which are essentially harmful to us).

Conclusion: God’s Reaction: How *would* God react to such high treason against His person and His legitimate rule? When our series continues, we shall chart the unfolding of His perfect divine plan as He disposes of Satan and his rebellion in a breathtaking way, gaining more and more glory at every step and bringing about for His faithful creatures even greater blessing in the end than obtained in the beginning:

³³ It is worth noting that we shall see this pattern of propaganda and usurpation again when Satan’s chief minion on earth, antichrist, rises to power (Dan.11:21-45).

- * God's judgment on the original earth and its restoration (in Part 2: The Genesis Gap).
- * God's creation of Man and Satan's aggressive response (in Part 3: The Purpose, Creation and Fall of Man).
- * God's suspension of summary judgment, and Satan's nefarious world-rule over the course of human history (in Part 4: Satan's World System: Past, Present and Future).
- * God's ultimate replacement and final judgment of Satan and his followers (in Part 5: Judgment, Restoration and Replacement).