

The Story of Our Redemption

God's Story begins in His garden, a place of infinite beauty and delight that Adam and Eve might enjoy forever but with a single proviso; there is one tree which represents evil they must avoid. Adam and Eve were created different from the animals in the Garden. Adam and Eve were blessed with five aspects of their nature, not shared by the animals:

1. A Free will
2. An active conscience that could learn to guide their free will.
3. They also were created with a moral center that could be taught to recognize God's goodness.
4. Adam and Eve were also given reason which in relations is reasonableness that meant
5. They were capable of learning divine love: what it is to love God and what it means to be loved by Him.

James taught that "Every good gift and every perfect gift [is]... from above, and coming from the Father of lights..." [James 1:17]. So when God made "...every tree ... pleasant to the sight, and good for food" [Genesis 2:9] this must mean that every bite of fruit and every flower that perfumed the air would proclaim the message of how good God is and how perfect His love for them.

Adam and Eve because they were moral beings with a conscience, and reasoning would be able to discover love! A relationship with God is unique on an intimate level because both God and each person are unique beings. All snow flakes are 6 sided but all are different.

But none of this is provable to Adam and Eve unless there is an "evil" present which they must refuse. Love is learned. Learning requires free will and free will is the choice. To be real: love needs a free will and, therefore, the choice to reject the love of another. Evil is not in the simple act of not eating the fruit of this one tree; evil is in the mind of the snake. Avoiding the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil alone is not sufficient to express their love for God because without the temptation they would have no occasion to eat of it. To provide the temptation—and thereby the freedom to love—two things are needed: (1) a tempter, Satan, and (2) Adam's desire (that we call carnal) that he had not harnessed or learned to control.

But the luxuries of Eden made them increasingly vulnerable to wanting—not so much the fruit from this tree, but—to know what "evil" was! The fruit became a metaphor for a desire they should not have. Adam was equipped to overcome:

- Not only is God faithful who will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist [1 Corinthians 10:13] but
- Adam and Eve's nature was like a wild horse that needed a conscience on the reins, a moral center to corral it in, and reasonableness that could recognize Satan's craft to deceive.

The word "luxury" which is the Greek word for "Eden" is only used in the New Testament to describe persons who live luxuriously and forsake God. Evil is an act of unfaithfulness in the heart, a self-sufficiency apart from God. They sought self-reliance over grace, the world in place of the Garden [Matthew 16:26]. Our entire Bible is God's explanation to us about the consequences of evil. [Romans 1:19] Reaping what is sown is a common parabolic theme [Psalm 126:5; Hosea 10:12; Matthew 13:1-9; Galatians 6:7].

[*There was no suffering in Eden. Learning without suffering?*]

- Suffering supports obedience to God
 - ā Hebrews 5:8 "Though [Jesus] were a Son [God's Son], yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."
- Perhaps, after the "Fall" God appointed suffering as a disciplinarian with forgiveness
 - ā Hebrews 12:9 "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"
- Adam and Eve were punished, not disciplined. There was no forgiveness in Eden.
 - ā Romans 5:18 "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

[*The temptation of Adam is centric to the story of the Genesis of evil.*]

- God never created multiple couples and told them to be monogamous—they could not be tempted with lust; they were the only two persons there.
- There was no gold or silver as a medium of exchange or shiny objects to collect—they could not be tempted with greed; everything was free and a limitless supply.
- They could not be tempted with vanity or pride, a competitive spirit of being greater than one another—they were naked and needing each other; they were the compliment of each other.
- They could not be tempted with something missing in the Garden they might want
- there was no need that was unsatisfied. One cannot miss something they never had.
- They could only be tempted with the desire to replace God in their hearts. Either they didn't recognize God's love for them or they lacked that love for Him.
 - ā Romans 1:21 "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

God created us with Freedom of will, a moral center, a conscience, and reason [reasonableness in relations] we are beings

- Of learning rather than governed by instinct.
- Of habit which is established learning
- Learning implies trial and error.
- Learning implies development, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually
- Learning in relationship is learning to trust—getting to know God.
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This is why Adam would have been vulnerable to temptation. But we are not supralapsarian; God did not create Adam to be easily deceived. Adam was not created a being that "would" sin but a being who "could" sin because he was a being who "could" as well freely trust God.

Job's text of His faithfulness to God is an example [Job 1:8-12]. This is more than God allowing Satan; this is more at God using Satan because of the role choice plays in love.

[*An explanation based on a questionable translation from the Latin.*]

Romans 5:12 says "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

The word "sinned" comes from a Greek word meaning to fall by the side of the road [instead of continuing straight ahead} which is a metaphor represented in the English idea: to transgress.

The Vulgate in error translates the end of this verse: "death passed upon all men, in whom [Adam] all have sinned"

The idea of our "fall" in Adam—as our proxy—supports the idea of total depravity, i.e. before faith, we are incapable of obeying God. But as we shall note the “will” is only part of the inner man [the heart] that has been corrupted.

Question: Are men depraved because of an altered nature or because of an estrangement from God?

- Philippians 2:15 "crooked and perverse nation [NET: society]"
- Romans 3:23 "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God..."
- Romans 11:23 "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all"
- Adam's sin introduced not only evil but its remedy, God's mercy.
- Galatians 3:22-23 "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."

"...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. [Romans 12:1-2].

1. Conscience - acceptable [pleasing]
2. Moral Center - good [holy]
3. Reason - perfect [totally befitting who we are]

[The Heart]

“The true story of every person in this world is not the story you see, the external story. The true story of each person is the journey of his or her heart.” — John Eldredge Brent Curtis, *The Sacred Romance: Drawing Closer to the Heart of God*

“And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” — Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

“Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.” — Mahatma Gandhi

“Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.” — Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*

On Amos 4:13 "Who declares to man what his thought is," [God is the searcher of the heart and reveals to men by prophets the state of their heart, since the judge is not only the outward actions, but the in most emotions of the heart.]

- Jeremiah 17:10 "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."
- Psalm 139:2 "You know my sitting down and mine rising up, You understand my thought afar off."
- Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

[*God has made the heart of man the center of His message.*]

- Jesus said the "seed" of the Word is "sown in the heart" [Matthew 13:19].
- Samuel said of David, "The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart" [1 Samuel 13:14]
- Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
- Luke saw God as "The heart-knower" [Acts 1:24; 15:8].
- Ezekiel 36:26 "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you"
- Acts 11:23 "Who, when he [Paul & Barnabas] came [to Antioch], and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."
- Acts 16:14 "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."
- Romans 10:10 "...with the heart man believes unto salvation...."

In the Old Testament

[*"The heart is the seat of ... spiritual capacities" - Kittel, vol III, page 606].*

- Luke 12:34 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
- Deuteronomy 6:5 "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." [Deuteronomy 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 30:6; Joshua 22:5; Matthew 22:37]
- Proverbs 18:15 "The understanding, discerning heart has acquired knowledge..."

- In the Ancient Language, "the heart" represents "the inner man." hardly distinguishable from "the soul."
- It is the seat of conscience [1 Samuel 25:31 ESV "pangs of conscience"]
- It is the seat of moral character [Psalm 17:3 "'proved mine heart;"]
- It is the seat of emotions and passions. [Genesis 34:3 "he loved (her) and spoke (to her heart) kindly unto (her)."]
- It is the seat of courage [Psalm 27:14 "Wait on the LORD: ... and he shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."]
- It is the seat of our appetites [Genesis 18:5 "I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort your hearts"]
- The heart is our mind, intelligence, memory, affections, and will. As such it can be broken, grieved, deceived, offended, proud, inclined, and stirred, etc.
 - ā Ecclesiastes 10:3 "He lives like a fool, lacking heart [understanding]."
 - ā Proverbs 6:32 "without heart" [without understanding].
 - ā Hosea 7:11 "Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart [knowledge]: they call to Egypt, and to go to Assyria."
- Equivalent in meaning to the "spirit" of a man
- Psalm 51:10 "renew a right established] spirit within me.." Psalm 57:8 "My heart is fixed [established], O God, my heart is fixed."
- Ezekiel 36:26 "new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:

In the New Testament

[It is the part of us that fellowships with God.]

- Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
- Luke 24:32 "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us"
- John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled: ... believe ... in me."
- Acts 16:14 "whose heart the Lord opened"
- 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Four Conditions of the Heart of man

[The Parable of the Sower.]

- A Hard Heart [Exodus 8:32 "Pharaoh hardened his heart"]
 - ā Matthew 13:19 readily deceived, rejecting Truth.
 - ā Romans 2:5 But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;
 - ā Acts 28:27 "This people's heart has become calloused [fat, dull] "
 - ā Ezekiel 36:26 "I will take away the stony heart... "
- A Fearful [insecure] Heart
 - ā Matthew 13:20-21 lost courage in persecution although they briefly embraced the Truth.
 - ā Matthew 11:29 "lowly [humble] in heart: ... shall find rest..."
 - ā Psalm 108:1 "my heart is fixed [firmly established]"
- A Foolish Heart [Ezekiel 11:21 CSB "hearts pursue their desire for abhorrent acts and detestable practices,"

- ā Matthew 13:22 Found the fun and amusements of this world more appealing.
- ā Romans 1:21 when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- ā Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
- A True Heart [Ezekiel 36:26 "A new heart also will I give you"]
 - ā Matthew 13:23 not only received the Truth but they became spiritually prosperous: Psalm 1:3.
 - ā 1 Samuel 13:14 " the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart,"
 - ā Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the pure in heart"
 - ā Hebrews 10:22 "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,..."

[The Regenerate New Heart]

- Cries out to God [Psalm 84:2].
- Seeks God [Psalm 119:2, 10].
- Responds to God [2 Kings 22:19].
- Trusts in the Lord [Proverbs 3:5].
- Loves the Lord [Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37].
- Praises the Lord [Psalm 9:1-2].
- Sings to the Lord [Psalm 30:12].
- Rejoices in the Lord [1 Samuel 2:21].
- Rejoices in God's Salvation [Psalm 13:5].
- Grateful to God [Colossians 3:13].
- Obeys God's :Aw [Psalm 119:34].
- Hides God's Word within [Psalm 119:11].

[*In Heaven there will be no evil.*]

- Our new bodies will not be capable of carnality.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:45, 49 "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. ... as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"
- There will be no tempter.
 - Revelation 20:10 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, ... for ever and ever."
- We will have a new heart
 - Ezekiel 36:26 "A new heart also will I give you"
- God's Word will be in our hearts
 - Jeremiahs 31:33 " I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts"
- We will know the Lord.
 - Jeremiahs 31:34 "...they shall all know me"
 - 1 Corinthians 13:12 "even as we are known."

What did Jesus accomplish *in* [not just on] the Cross? [*in and by dying*]

[*There are Biblical provisions from His death but (we will ask) why did it take His death to provide them?*]

- Forgiveness [Hebrews 9:22].
 - Why could He not forgive us without dying?
- Victory over the devil [Colossians 2:15].
 - Why was victory denied Him in a battle with evil for the souls of men unless He die?
- I declared expression of His love for us [Romans 5:8; John 3:16].
 - Could He not show His love by simply opening up heaven for us without dying?
- Freedom us from the bondage to sin [Romans 6:6].
 - Why could He not do this without dying?
- Ultimately: to reconcile us to Himself [Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:20].
 - Why did reconciliation require His death?

The Motifs

[*offered to explain Jesus' crucifixion.*]

1. Jesus bore our sins.

[To bear sin is to forgive in the O.T. but in the N.T. it means to remove them.]

- I Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.
- Hebrews 9:28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

3. Jesus paid our ransom freeing us from a bondage to sinning

["for" here means in our place or in exchange for: An O.T. practice of a kinsman paying for a relative the price of their slavery or their debt they owed their "master"]

- Matthew 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
- Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many
- I Timothy 2:6 who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.
- Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

4. Jesus took our place: (Our substitute, a vicarious atonement)

[An appeasement (propitiation) of God's anger or wrath. This concept defines our word "punishment" which is not well defined in the Scripture as soteriological. Substitutionary is not necessarily equal to satisfactory. The question here is not one of retribution but satisfaction. In what sense was God "satisfied" with Jesus' suffering—His passion?]

- Isaiah 53:4-6 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished [chastised] by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- Romans 5:18 Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.
- 2 Corinthians 5:14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died..
- Romans 3:25-26 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.
- Hebrews 2:17 For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God,

and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people..

- I John 2:1-2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

5. Jesus legally satisfied the law of God's Holiness.

["The Law" regards the Torah which Israel in Deuteronomy 29 swore an oath to uphold. But God recognized their "hearts" were hard (vs. 4). The Law needed to be satisfied (vs 27; Leviticus 26:25 for which cause Jesus came to die (Matthew 5:17).]

- Romans 5:18-19; 8:1 Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus

Note: The debt and punishment motifs are rooted deep in the religious consciousness in Christianity although they appear to be less favorable themes for the Biblical writers. If justice is placed in our system of jurisprudence or legal system, we are left with a parable which may or may not at all parallel what was in the Divine plan for our salvation.

The reason

[It was the price of a new heart which was promised by New Covenant and affirmed in His death and resurrection. Romans 6:4.]

- Jeremiah 31:31-34 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.
- Ezekiel 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh

Jesus reconciled us to God

Romans 3:25 "Whom God hath set forth [appointed and arranged] to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"

- Wycliff "forgiver," Geneva 1599 and Swahili upatanisho "reconciliation"
- ἰλαστήριον The place where? or the means by which? By and large rion indicates a location more than a process comes from the word "mercy" Was God's mercy found in Him, beginning, centered, and end in Him or Jesus was appointed the means by which God would show mercy.

[*The Syllogism*]

- Why did Jesus die to reconcile us to God: [2 Corinthians 5:18].
 - ā Without His crucifixion no reconciliation with God would be possible [Mt. 26:39].
 - ā Jesus was crucified.
- Therefore: We know that through Christ we are reconciled to God [Romans 3:25].

- How was Jesus' Crucifixion Covenantal? [Romans 7:4].
 - ā The Old now fulfilled, the New could be ratified. [Hebrews 8:13, Galatian 3:10, 13].
 - ā The Old Covenant has been fulfilled thru His death. [Colossians 2:14; Lev. 26:25].
- Therefore: Our reconciliation is a provision of the New Covenant [Jere.31:34; Hebrews. 10:16].

- Why was Jesus Resurrected? [Romans 4:25].
 - ā Thru His resurrection our resurrection is made possible [1 Corinthians 15:14, 17].
 - ā Our new life is provided through our resurrection [Romans 6:4; 1 Co. 15:44, 51].
- Therefore: Because He rose again, we can have a new life in Him [Romans 6:11].

- Why could Adam be Tempted?
 - ā Adam had Free Will
 - ā Love requires Free Will
- Therefore: Adam could love God

- Why was Adam not given another chance? [Genesis 2:17].
 - ā Mankind needed a new heart [Jeremiah 17:9].
 - ā God desires to be merciful [Romans 11:32; Galatians 3:22].
- Therefore: God showed mercy by giving mankind a new heart [Ezekiel. 36:26; Jere. 31:34]

- Why were sacrifices required under Mosaic Law? [Numbers 10:10; Deuteronomy 12:11].
 - ā The sacrifice was an expression of man's need for forgiveness [Hebrews. 9:22].
 - ā God would declare our redemption through Christ's death [Romans 3:25]
- Therefore: Christ would become our paschal lamb dealing with sin. [1 Corinthians 5:7].

Sacrifices in Myth and Non-Christian Religion

1. **Do et Des** [Latin for: I give so that you might give]. Pagan sacrifices were reciprocal.
 - Jesus' death was not characterized by reciprocity. It became a free gift of grace. Christ's death to redeem us was an act of God sacrificing His own son on our behalf.
2. **Scapegoating**: Sacrifices were substitutionary in which the animal died in exchange for the supplicant's life to appease the wrath of some god or gods.
 - These are not to be confused with a sacrifice for forgiveness or as a vicarious act of atonement. Jesus was not a scapegoat because He willingly complied to the plan of God for our redemption.
 - As regards God reason: It was love not wrath that sent Jesus to Calvary [John 3:16].
3. Pagan gods contended jealously for **human attention**.
 - I would caution believers not to confuse our God's "zeal" with a jealousy that is hurtful and vengeful. Our God seeks reconciliation and a relationship with us.
4. Pagan sacrifices represented a **cultural compliance** in governing people.
 - Christianity is the only "religion" with a creed that emphasizes love and peace among the fruit of the Spirit. God's covenant is written now on the heart and not in ritualized practices.
5. A primary use of the sacrifice in paganism is for discerning the will of the gods through **divinations**.
 - The Christian God spiritually leads us by conviction and the garrison of His peace on the reins of the heart.

Biblical Sacrifices as a type of Christ:

1. **Adoration** or love for God [the Burnt Offering, Leviticus 6:8-13],
2. **Thanksgiving** to God [the Peace Offering, Leviticus 7:11-12],
3. Desire for **Reconciliation** with God [the Sin Offering, Leviticus 5:1-13],
4. **Devotion** to God [the Meal Offering, Leviticus 2:11-13]
5. The Need for **Cleansing** from sin [The Trespass Offering, Leviticus 5:14-19]
6. A Desire for **Fellowship** with God [the Drink Offering, Exodus 29:14]
7. A Desire for **Communion** with God [the Incense Offering, Exodus 30:1-10]