

THREE BEGINNINGS

Genesis 1; Job 38; Isaiah 14

The Unfolding of Eternity Past

By

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Opening.

It was English author {and believer} G.K. Chesterton who said, “I had always felt life first as a story; and if there is a story... there is a storyteller.” Indeed there is— the supreme Storyteller, the King of all Creation. Christianity has lost its sense of the Larger Story. Life is like a movie we’ve arrived at 40 minutes late: we know something’s going on, things are happening ...things good and grand or woeful and wicked, but we have no idea how to interpret them. This is a ploy of the Great Pretender, the Seducer of our souls. He is at work— constantly, feverishly— trying to steal, kill, and destroy our understanding of the Epic, the unfolding of history and the part we play in it. To separate us from both *our* hearts and the heart of God, and from the Larger Story our God is telling.

The recovery of our story starts right here: with viewing life as a mythic reality, an Epic Adventure. And recognizing that you are not alone, and never have been. You were made to walk with your King, to go to war with your Commander. The consummate challenge of the Christian Life is to live spiritually, powerfully, an intentional life of weight and worth in a world which refuses to believe that life exists, a world that will *never* embrace what it cannot control. You are an outcast, my friend, an outcast from the *kosmos*. And you always will be. So, embrace this, relish your status as one of those leading a revolt against the originator of revolution, a rebel against the author of rebellion.

To look at life mythically is to understand the Story, to see something beyond the everyday soap opera. For that we must have eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to know the reality around us. We cannot live in the arrogance of unreality; we must live in the purpose of the present. And our hearts must connect to a single truth: **Christianity is a Love Affair in the midst of a life and death Battle.** Christianity tells us, once and for all, that there is an Author to the Divine Drama, and that His heart toward us is infinitely good. And He has made us to live in an Epic Adventure— alongside Him, as allies of the Almighty. **Your life will never make sense until your heart embraces this truth.**

One final thought to carry in your soul: If your days are full of nothing but battle, nothing but conflict, you’ll miss out on the glory of the Gospel. And we were created for great glory, for communion with the Fellowship of the Trinity. Because the Trinity is the mold, the Fellowship in which we were forged. Without it our hearts will yearn for a Day that will never come, a Sun that will never shine. For Christ is the Source of all Life, and it is in Him and with Him {in His-Story} that we must live.

The Three Beginnings.

There is a storyline to the great Cosmic Conflict which rages around us at this very moment; and we must learn to live in light of it.

In order to gain a proper grasp on this we have to go back to the time *before* the beginnings, into the far reaches of Eternity past.

Love Eternal.

Act I in the Epic Drama of history is *Love Eternal*. The Story starts with **God**. And God has no beginning, but a continuous existence, an Eternal Life { ↔ }. In Eternity is God in three Persons {co-infinite, co-equal, and co-eternal} in perfect harmony, intimacy and communion with one another. In the trailer for the movie *The Fellowship of the Ring* the first words to appear on the screen are, “Fate has chosen him. Evil will hunt him. A fellowship will protect him.” You hear that, believers? “*God* has chosen you. *Evil* will hunt you. *A Fellowship* will protect you.” This is that Fellowship: Father, Son and Spirit in perfect relationship with one another. Moses wrote in Psalm 90:2, “**Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the Earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God.**”

The question many have often asked is: Why would God even bother to create? Why not just skip it and save this entire mess? Was He lonely? No. Did He need someone else to love Him? No. The members of the Triune Godhead have an infinite and eternal love for one another; so that can't be it. God created simply to glorify Himself, for no other reason than that right there, to bring Himself honor by demonstrating the perfect unity of His essence: His sovereignty and eternity, His unconditional love, perfect justice and impeccable righteousness {which together comprise His 'holiness'} His omniscience {all-knowing}, omnipotence {all-powerful} and omnipresence {ever-presentness}, and finally, His unchanging immutability and ultimate veracity {which together comprise His 'faithfulness'}. God never fails because it is impossible for Him to do so!

Out of the three beginnings to follow Act I, who or what came first?

Angels All Around.

Act II, Scene I involves the Angels. These are mighty creatures, powerful creatures with tremendous beauty, intellect and ability. The glory they possess is a reflection of God's glory, their strength a picture of His strength, their authority a symbol of His might and majesty. They were on hand to witness the splendor of Creation: the second beginning.

Creation Comes to Be.

Act II, Scene II gives us the Universe. In Genesis 1:1 Moses records the eyewitness account as inspired by the Spirit of God. It begins in the Hebrew with *bara bereshiyth Elohiym*: “**In a beginning** [really, the second beginning] **God created out of nothing** [That's what *bara* means = 'to create out of nothing.' Theologians call this *fiat* creation: He spoke the Universe into being.] **the Heavens** [*ha'shamayim*: all of stellar space and all the galaxies contained there] **and the Earth** [*ha-aretz*],” i.e., the Universe.

“Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: ‘Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man of war; I will ask you, and you instruct Me! Where were you when I laid the foundation of the Earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements— surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?’” 38:1-7.

There are three key phrases in v. 7. The first is **“morning stars”**— **“when the morning stars sang together.”** **“Morning stars”** are a category of angels with the power and authority to rule, but without Lucifer’s exalted position as the most glorious creature to ever come from the hand of Jesus Christ. Remember that the name ‘Lucifer,’ which we get from the Latin, means- ‘light-bearer;’ it’s translated in Isaiah 14:12, **“star of the morning,”** or **“morning star.”**

The second is **“sons of God,”** which is a technical phrase in the Hebrew; it’s used only five times in the OT {Gen. 6:2 and 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; and 38:7}. *Beney Elohiym* is always used for angels, never for mankind. Not once. Now, there are some similar phrases in the Old and New Testaments: **“sons of God”** in the OT is angels; **“sons of God”** in the NT is the Family of Faith, believers in the Age of Grace {Gal. 3:26}; **“Son of God”** in the NT is the Lord Jesus Christ. These are crucial distinctions to make. The third thing here is **“all”**— **“and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”** Interestingly, the NIV and TLB both have **“and all the angels shouted for joy.”** But the key is that little word **“all,”** from the Hebrew particle *kol*; *kol* signifies the whole of something, its entirety, its totality. It tells us that we’re talking about that Time before the angelic rebellion! Here’s the point. The Universe was created as the domain of the angels. It was in this perfect universe that they ruled with the authority given them by God; it was in this perfect universe that they fulfilled whatever responsibilities God gave them.

Rebellion and Betrayal.

Act II, Scene III is an act of Rebellion and Betrayal. Somewhere in these un-named aeons of time Lucifer became disenchanted with the place and power and prominence he’d been given and decided upon a course which could lead only to destruction ...a *revolt*, a rebellion to overthrow the God of Heaven and Earth. One of two things happened in the heart of our enemy: [1] he became unwilling to rule a perfect primeval Earth as a subordinate of God, as a prince to his King {falling prey to his own beauty and intelligence}; or [2] he decided that this world was not enough. He wanted to rule it all, the entire Universe, and displace God in the process.

I want you to note once and for all that sin was born in the heart of Satan. Contrary to popular belief, misguided I might add, God is not the Author of sin. But that’s precisely what Satan would love us to believe: that it is God’s fault there is so much sin and suffering in this world. Suffering is a result of sin just like physical death is the result of spiritual death. When Lucifer set his will in opposition to God’s will, that is treason!

There is the *origin* of sin. And it all started where? In the heart— the seat of Satan’s understanding and freedom. Get this down. **Mental sins are among the most evil because everything we do and say is a result of what we think.** Hatred, arrogance, vindictiveness, self-righteousness, self-pity, bitterness, jealousy, rage and revenge: this is the root behind every evil thing man’s ever done.

Isaiah recorded how he said within his heart, **“I will ascend to Heaven** [the dwelling place of the Almighty]. **I will raise my throne above the stars of God** [‘Stars of God’ is a metaphor in both Testaments for the angelic realm. He’s saying, ‘I will rule the angels ...and take from God their worship, honor and praise.’]. **...I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north** [In nearly all ancient mythology the farthest point north was thought to be the abode of the gods, like Mt. Olympus. This shows us his desire to rule the Earth. My question is: Man hasn’t even been created yet, so why the Earth? If this was not Lucifer’s realm to rule over initially, then why the Earth?]. **I will ascend above the heights of the clouds** [‘Clouds’ are a picture of the presence and the glory of God. Remember the *Shekinah* of Israel, the wilderness, the Tabernacle and Temple? He seeks the honor and the glory which belong to God and God alone.]. **I will make myself like** [*Damah-* ‘be like, resemble’ in the Hithpael stem, which is intensive reflexive.] **the Most High** [*Elyon* is both a proper name for God and a title signifying ‘Possessor of Heaven and Earth’].”

You see what’s driving him? This is what he wants. He wants to possess as his own all of Heaven and Earth. I’ll paraphrase it for you: “I will put myself on par with the Most High, equal to Him. And we’ll have a showdown, one god to another, to see who rules forevermore.” Only Satan forgot one little thing in the insanity of his arrogance: **there is a God, and he’s not Him.** The creature could no more defeat his Creator than a three-month old child could feed and clothe and house him or herself, then defeat you in hand to hand combat!

The very moment he chose to follow his own will, this attitude of arrogance, he fell. That’s the nature and origin of sin. The moment he sought to influence others to his plan and purpose of opposition to God he brought the principle of evil into the Universe. That’s the nature and origin of evil. **Evil is any plan, any purpose, or any system {like all religions} which seeks to accomplish its objectives either apart from Christ or in opposition to Christ!** So, after his trial is held and the sentence of **“eternal fire ...for the devil and his angels”** is declared {Matt. 25:41}, with the Accuser given the opportunity to appeal, what does God do? He gives us beginning number three.

Open War.

Act III is the time of Open War, when the Battle rages. This is where we are now! At War. Christianity is a Love Affair in the midst of a life and death Battle. The real reason most believers have never walked in the freedom Christ offers, never lived the Life Christ promised {Jn. 10:10}, is that they *won’t* fight for it. Or even worse, they’ve been told *not* to. My sheep, hear me on this one:

We reside in the very heart of a brutal Battle, at the centre of a vicious War against an enemy who knows his time is short— Revelation 12:12. **Open war is upon us, whether we would risk it or not.**

The third beginning comes in Act III: angels, universe, and man. **G.A.U.M.** {the M being for Mankind}. Man was placed in the midst of this prehistoric contest with a similar soul, and the exact same freedom of choice and decision that Lucifer and his angels had in Eternity past. He is a lower creature in every way, shape and form, and the question is: ‘What will he do with his God given freedom?’ And on an even more personal plane, ‘What will you do with your God-given volition, with your freedom to choose for Christ or against Him?’ Cause with our freedom comes the greatest gift of all — the capacity to love. God enables us to love by giving us the most tremendous treasure in all of Creation: He puts a heart at the centre of our soul. Why? Because *love*, not battle, is the point of this Story; as the Romans used to say, *Amor Est Vitae Essentia*: Love is the Essence of Life. And if you long for a world where love is real you must give each person the freedom to choose. **True love can only be chosen; it cannot be coerced.** And what about Act IV?

A Final Restoration.

Act IV is the Restoration Of All Things— A Perfect Place of Perfect Peace— Revelation 21-22. This is what’s coming one day, one day on the eve of Eternity. But not yet, not yet. For the moment, for the duration of Act III, we live in the ‘now and the not yet.’

Finale.

There are five steps that lead to either success or failure in the Conflict of Christ. We can illustrate them by the lives of Moses and Elijah, considered by ancient rabbis to be the two greatest prophets in the history of Israel. For Moses, by his seven decisions of faith and humility in Hebrews 11:23-29; and by Elijah when he set a single choice before the people of God saying, **“How long {will} you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him,”** 1 Kings 18:21b. In essence, he drew a line in the sand and said, “The Lord or Baal, who’s it going to be?”

1. **Attitude** {Jms. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5}. There are two basic attitudes in life: arrogance and humility. The former is self-centered; the latter is Jesus-centered. You and I will approach life from one of these two perspectives every day.
2. **Priorities.** This is our scale of values, what’s most important to us in life. They’re either going to be temporal or eternal, but they won’t be both. Jesus in Matthew 6:33 said, **“But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness,”** and everything else you need will be provided to you. **The main thing in life is to keep the main thing the main thing!** And the Main Thing is Jesus Christ.

Listen to the words of this ancient hero of faith.

It was Joshua who set before the elders of Israel a crucial challenge in Joshua 24:15. He said, **“If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today [this day] whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River [Euphrates], or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house we will serve the LORD.”** Now this was a man in the eyes of the Lord ...a man of character, of conviction, of courage, a warrior among warriors, one of only *two* men in the OT who were said to have **“followed the LORD fully:”** Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

“Followed the Lord fully” is a Hebrew phrase found only five times in Scripture, three of those in the Book of Joshua. Of these two men God said to Moses in Numbers 32:11-12, **“None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun....”** They did not stray from the Course of the Conflict; they exercised incredible endurance on the trail that leads from the Cross to the Crown.

3. **Decisions.** Our attitude determines our priorities; our priorities determine our decisions. Good or evil, the consequence of a decision we make will always be consistent with the decision itself! Call it the Universal Law, if you like {Gal. 6:7}. Those decisions can be spiritual or carnal, sacrificial or selfish, it's your choice.

E.E. Cummings wrote, “To be nobody but yourself {i.e., who God designed you to be, who Christ created you to be}— in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else— means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting.” {Parenthesis and additional comment mine}

4. **Actions.** The natural outcome of our decisions is our actions. **The actions of our lives reveal the attitude of our hearts.** We can boil action down to right or wrong. How's that for simplicity? Action, not always motivation, for only God knows all the circumstances that surround why we do what we do.
5. **Consequences.** Remember this. **To every action belongs a result; to every decision a consequence— Hosea 8:7b.** Our actions bring either blessing or cursing for ourselves and those around us. No one is an isolated island, unrelated to the rest of the world. You cannot change cursing into blessing until you humble yourself in the presence of God. And that is all in the attitude.

With the stage set then, we see *Adam* and *Iyshah* in the Garden in Genesis 3. By the way, the Battle in the Garden is not between good and evil but between perfect man and evil angel, between a state of perfection and a state of deception. On this issue the whole Conflict hinges: What will this perfect creature do when given the freedom to choose for or against the purpose of God?

The Conflict raging in your life and mine still centers around this one crucial issue: *God* or *evil* ...what's it going to be? Every moment of every day our decisions determine our destiny, they demonstrate to the Universe which path we've chosen, and ultimately, what is of utmost importance to us in life. The fact is that you're going to make decisions that are compatible with your priorities, with what is most important on your scale of values. And our priorities are determined by our attitude. Arrogance or humility, but the choice is up to you.