

Chapter 3 The World Until Now

The fallen state

As Adam and Eve began their lives as caretakers of Earth they were endowed with free will, along with an opportunity to exercise it. They began clean and sinless in an unblemished relationship with their Creator. But love is a choice, and cannot truly exist if there is no other option, therefore they were also capable of communication with Satan. This God-given freedom to choose to love or not love and to sin or not sin would not be violated by God, and *could* not be violated by Satan.

When they obeyed a suggestion from Satan that was clearly contrary to the will of God, their original state of perfection died. This death of perfection left no hope of restoration, but would need to be replaced by an entirely new life with its' own clean slate. Thousands of years later this sinless rebirth would be provided by Jesus substituting his own life for our failure, so our relationship with God could be restored.

But God's grace and mercy transcends time, and a ritual was provided whereby individuals of that era could walk in relationships with God. When an individual squarely faced the responsibility for their moral failures, a symbolic sacrifice of a sinless animal would be allowed to reserve access to the prophesied salvation through Jesus. This symbol of repentance would make a love relationship with God possible from within a fallen world.

Nevertheless, the fallen state remains an arena in which seduction and chaos continue to war against our souls – even as our free will remains intact. As in the garden of Eden, both God and Satan are capable of communicating with our souls – albeit on a less perceptible basis.

As mankind chose failure while in the garden, we must now choose to love God and focus upon his interests if we are to live lives of purpose and fulfillment. Jesus alludes to this condition in the fallen world when he refers to Satan as “the god of this world.” This conflict is stated more plainly in James 4:7 **“Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”** In any case, some form of two way communication with both God and the devil is evident.

In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he explains that Eve was deceived, but that Adam knowingly chose to disobey God. Eve was not innocent, in that the story reveals that she wanted to believe a lie because she preferred it to be so. Genesis 3:4-6 tells the story:

Gen.3:4. “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5. for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.”

Eve was attracted to the physical and sensual expectations of the fruit, and to the power of the knowledge she was told it held. She chose to believe the words of this strange creature, rather than those of her Creator.

Adam was not fooled, but Eve was his only source of human companionship. Since Eve had violated God's commandment, she could no longer stay in God's presence. So refusing the fruit would have meant losing her. A sad but romantic tale perhaps; but he chose to fail with her rather than to continue his relationship with God.

In addition to the affect upon their relationships with God, there would be changes in their relationships with each other, with Satan, and with the world itself. Eve had submitted to Satan, and Adam had submitted to Eve. God's desires for the earth were thus compromised in favor of Satan's interests.

Beyond this, the control of the earth that had been given to Adam, which he had yielded to Eve when he obeyed her, had now been yielded to Satan through Eve. As mentioned above, a few millenniums

later, Jesus himself referred to Satan as “the god of this world.” This condition is further referenced in **Rom.8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope.**

So here we have the new world order: Satan, then Eve, and then Adam. God was not amused; and he took immediate action:

Gen.3:14 Then the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because thou hast done this, Cursed are you more than all the livestock, And more than any animal of the field; On your belly you shall go, And dust you shall eat All the days of your life; 15 And I will make enemies of you and the woman, And of your offspring and her Descendant; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise Him on the heel.”

16 To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall deliver children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.”

17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; With hard labor you shall eat *from* it All the days of your life. 18 “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; Yet you shall eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Until you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”

Men would now have to fight with the earth for their very sustenance, and for the survival of their families. Satan would continue to roam the earth, and have a devastating effect upon all who would be willing to obey him – as experienced by Eve.

When there is harmony there is no need for authority, but now mankind would be born into a state of separation from God, in with each individual would desire to rule the world for themselves – even as Eve had separated herself by aspiring to become like God. But now Eve would be dependent upon her husband, and have to submit to him for her provision. Man on the other hand, would now have to fight with the earth for his sustenance, and plead with God for the weather and earthly resources to do so.

Other than this, there is little mention of any form of government before Noah and the flood (although there is a single reference to a city).

There remain many mysteries concerning early mankind, and many legitimate questions that might be asked, but the details are simply not included in the Bible. Instead it continues to focus upon a righteous line of genealogy between Adam and Noah. What we *do* see is mankind becoming corrupted spiritually and genetically as they began to mix with other anthropomorphic races. The resulting tide of violence and corruption eventually set the stage for a reboot of humanity through a strain of mankind that had remained spiritually intact as it descended from Adam.

Evolution of government

The governments God has ordained among mankind have been appropriate to the population densities and behavior of the people. Even as the various later empires themselves have arisen and fallen, the legacy of the order they produced continued on for generations afterwards.

A After the perfect state of the Garden of Eden, when mankind failed, God established the order of family authority as noted in Genesis 3:14-19. Besides the need for men to fight with the earth for their very sustenance, they would have to offer sacrifices to acknowledge their sins and request mercy from God.

B Upon the genetic and spiritual corruption of early mankind among other anthropomorphic races, God provided a near total elimination of the human race. Humanity was rebooted through Noah and his family. After the flood God instructed Noah and his sons to multiply and scatter throughout the earth (Gen.9:1). This post-flood edict of spreading them out would minimize conflicts among humanity.

But an ambitious leader named Nimrod came up with a building project to oppose this scattering. He would consolidate and rule humanity under a single government (Gen.11:4). This project would be different from later global dominions in that at this point, most of the world’s population was already in

one general area. Future empires would have to go out and conquer to bring the world under their control.

But God stepped in and fragmented this enterprise through communication problems. Interestingly, modern linguists have been able to trace common threads of origin among the “Indo-European” language group. This commonality connects Persian languages with Indian, Germanic, and Latin.

Nonetheless, increasing populations of fallen mankind need some level of guidance to keep them from destroying each other.

C God selected Abram and his household to provide a tribal model for the world to see as a desirable example. God’s blessing would be upon households that served Him – beginning with Abraham, his family and descendants, and all who were willing to serve God. Generally speaking, Abraham was well received and respected among the various kingdoms and towns he encountered.

D God then forged a racial identity out of Abraham’s descendants during their generations of slavery in Egypt. There they developed as a culture within a controlling nation.

E Eventually, this race burst forth into freedom when they acknowledged their need for deliverance from the bondage they were under. This was achieved through the blood atonement of the sacrifice of innocent animals.

As they were delivered they were given a national identity that the world would recognize as blessed and protected by God. Internally, God gave them laws to guide their individual and national behavior. There would also be annual feast days upon which this nation of free and independent households would gather and acknowledge the blessings of God and their spiritual identity.

F For awhile, local and international conflicts were resolved by a series of godly leaders whom God anointed and rose up from among them. But as their population increased the need for interacting with other nations on a more formal level became evident; so they began to be ruled by kings who would coordinate nationwide campaigns.

During these last two phases, the blessing or abandonment of God would be evident as a response to their degree of faithfulness to Him – both individually and nationally.

G As the nation of Israel began to drift into debauchery and chaos, God paused the disintegration of mankind by establishing a series of global governments, which still affect the world to this day.

The age of empires

As the global population and international conflicts increased, God provided powerful rulers to develop international systems of law and order. God revealed a sequence of five global empires to Nebuchadnezzar through the prophet Daniel. These empires would bring a level of unity and guidance during periods of chaotic conflict between smaller groups. Although Rome itself has faded, its justice systems continue to benefit the world today.

God raised up Babylon during a time of growing apostasy in Israel, and the resulting conquest and exile may have appeared at the time to be the end of Israel as a nation. But ironically, this protected Israel from disintegrating into the pagan practices and cultures of the surrounding nations, and it helped them to maintain their national identity .

In Daniel chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a huge statue that so disturbed him, that he gathered all his counselors who claimed to have mystical powers to interpret it for him. But the wily Nebuchadnezzar was not going to allow the possibility of fraud, so he added an incentive program: If you people can’t tell me the dream as well as its meaning, you are not qualified to tell me its interpretation, and so I will kill you all.

Presumably, as magicians and charlatans were packing up and fleeing for their lives, Daniel and his friends prayed. And God revealed the dream to Daniel as follows:

Dan.2:32 “As for this image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, 33 its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay.

34 “Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them: and the *stone that smote the image* became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

God also revealed its interpretation to Daniel

Dan.2:37 “Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory;..... Thou art the head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay.

44 “And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

After having served Nebuchadnezzar until his death, Daniel was still alive when the Medo-Persian empire conquered Babylon (while under Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson). Daniel then served as prime minister under Darius the Mede. This federation of two nations had been depicted by the arms of silver in the statue seen by king Nebuchadnezzar. Later, in chapter ten, Gabriel informed Daniel that Greece would be the next force to rule. This had been represented by the bronze belly and thighs in the statue of Nebuchadnezzar.

As we consider world history since that time, we can clearly identify three of the four remaining world empires that have arisen since Nebuchadnezzar: The Medes and the Persians, Greece under Alexander the Great, and Rome.

In spite of Satan’s involvement in the world’s empires, we need to remember that this sequence was ordained by God, as we saw in Daniel 2:37. Hundreds of years after this prophecy, the apostle Paul instructed believers to submit to the authority of Rome (the fourth of the prophesied five kingdoms), and to be grateful for the order and protection it was providing. Historians refer to this period of relative peace in the world as “Pax Romana.” Although today Rome has come and gone, its legacy in the form of law and justice systems has continued to provide us with a standard of stability and justice. To some degree, we are still under a system of Roman Law.

Under the antichrist however, those who obey will be damned – so the rule of the antichrist does not qualify as one of these kingdoms that is backed by God’s authority. Nebuchadnezzar himself gave us a prophetic example of a Satanic system that will arise awhile after the God-ordained empires. This is found in Daniel chapter three. There he creates this humongous statue of gold representing only himself, and he requires the world to bow down to it – under penalty of death. In this case, God honored and protected those who defied the king. Happily, Nebuchadnezzar soon repented of this, and proclaimed that only the God of creation was to be worshiped.

As we consider our position in history today, there remains a fifth God ordained empire depicted by the statue of Nebuchadnezzar. Instabilities notwithstanding, it will continue to fend off global chaos for a little longer.

Another statue-related prophesy would be the “stone age.” where God’s kingdom was symbolized by a stone of supernatural origin that would grow in scale and intensity until it eliminates, scatters, and then replaces the five global empires.

Messiah Week

In Daniel chapter 9, Daniel had been in prayer for Jerusalem, and the angel Gabriel was sent to reassure him and to provide insights into the future.

9:24 “Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. 25 Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks [7+60+2 = 69]: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times.”

Here God revealed when the messiah would appear: From the time that the proclamation would be made to restore Jerusalem, it would be sixty nine periods of seven – which has been understood to mean 483 years.

I have heard that this calculation would take us to the date of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (at 9:30 am I believe). I have also read that this calculation would take us to the day that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan.

For whatever theologians might come up with, the Bible gives a clear answer: When Andrew met Jesus, he found his brother Simon and told him: “I have found the Messiah.” When the woman at the well told Jesus that they would understand things better when the Messiah came, Jesus told her that he himself was the Messiah. When Jesus went to be baptized, John first saw the Holy Spirit come down in the form of a dove and rest upon him. Upon this same occasion, God Himself spoke from heaven, introducing His son and inaugurating the ministry of the Messiah. So here we have four examples among the Biblical references defining this occasion as the point at which the Messiah was manifest. This earthly phase of ministry would culminate in his ascension into heaven 3-1/2 years later.

The triumphal entry consisted mainly of an excited crowd who would turn on him a few days later – and it was by no means his first visit to Jerusalem. The only doves involved came a little later that same day when Jesus was driving them out of the temple. But whether by the anointing of the Holy Spirit or by the triumphal entry, there is an unavoidable gap between the outset of this week and its conclusion.

Although this Messiah week would have little relevance to Daniels generation, the angel summarized it for our benefit in two verses. Verse 26 touches upon the major physical events, and verse 27 provides a couple of insights concerning the unseen realm that drove them.

It is a common practice within the Bible to describe the same concepts from different perspectives. Jesus for instance, describes the kingdom of heaven by using multiple parables to reveal different characteristics. God chose to write four versions of the Gospels by very different people, to broaden the understandings of a future world of seekers. So let’s forgive Gabriel for repeating himself in verses 26 and 27 as he briefly summarizes this seventieth week.

9:26 “And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined.”

Jesus was not cut off on the day He was baptized, but 3-1/2 years later. The word in verse 26 translated as “nothing” is also correctly translated as “no one” – as in: “I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter.” The second part of verse 26 speaks of a different entity than the Messiah –

military forces in this case. They will destroy Jerusalem and the temple (and they certainly did a few decades later).

9:27 “And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate.”

I have not seen any parallel Biblical reference to a covenant between a military figure and the Jewish nation. Nor would it make any sense that the “he” in verse 27 could possibly be the one who just obliterated Israel in verse 26. And yet again, verse 27 refers to two distinctly different entities. It doesn’t take much smarts to at least see who did not make the referenced covenant.

The new covenant Jesus made – the New Testament – was salvation through his own blood. The atonement previously achieved ritualistically through the sacrifice of animals would now be forever fulfilled through Jesus and thus rendered obsolete. This is also made very clear in Hebrews 10:10-12. **Heb.10:10 “By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time. 11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD”**

After the crucifixion of Jesus, any blood sacrifice denies that the blood of Jesus was adequate. Jesus removed all meaning from further blood sacrifice and by this, made the act itself an abomination. We can also see within the context of verse 27 that “**the wing of abominations**” at that point was the conveyance that brought on the desolation. Isaiah 66:3 speaks of this “**He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as he that breaketh a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as he that offereth swine’s blood; he that burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an idol. .**”

If this prophecy was not fulfilled at that point, when was or will it be fulfilled? Remember also, that God tore the veil in the temple from top to bottom. “**by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is His flesh**” (Heb.10:20). Unless the religious leaders believed that Caesar had caused the crucifixion-day earthquake, they should have been paying attention. Clearly, Jesus stopped the sacrifice and offering in verse 27, (and replaced them with the commemorative sacrament of bread and wine in communion).

Once the excitement of the crucifixion died down, the Jews promptly resewed their veil and resumed their traditional sacrifices – declaring as they did so that the blood of Jesus meant nothing. Was God going to stand for that? This abomination required the elimination of any trace of this monumental stench in the nostrils of God! A wipe-out of the traditional Jewish culture was in order. So verse 27 tells us WHY the city and the temple had to be destroyed.

It could legitimately be said of both Jesus and of the Roman general involved, that they put an end to sacrifice. Jesus fulfilled its spiritual purpose once and for all, and the Romans cleansed Judea of the ensuing abomination resulting from its continued practice.

Jesus decreed a special level of judgment against the Jewish leadership of their current generation. **Luke11:50 “so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.”**

This prophesy of Jesus was convincingly fulfilled in the natural realm in 70AD, and presumably there were spiritual judgments as well.

Taken together, verse 27 is a repeat of verse 26 in both structure and content, but with different details highlighted.

Since the time of Christ we are left with 3-1/2 years to complete the list mentioned in Daniel 9:24. A search of the book of Revelation will reveal no seven year period – although some try to create one by gluing together two of the five references in Revelation to the 3-1/2 period.

I'm going to propose a controversial and ironic theory here. Understand that this a personal opinion for which I claim no scriptural support – but just consider: If the Jews of today owned the temple mount, the more orthodox among them would be reviving the now-satanic ritual of blood sacrifice. Might it be that God is protecting the Jewish people from Himself by raising up Mohammad to protect the site?

Based upon the forgoing evidence, the end-times dogmas of a seven year period of tribulation and the rise of a third earthly temple depend solely upon a highly debatable interpretation of Daniel 9:26-27.

Looking ahead

So today, besides the fifth empire, we are left with 3-1/2 years to complete this seventieth week. The relevance to our lives today is covered by various exhortations in the Bible concerning alertness, and diligence in fulfilling our respective callings. Mt.24:4-51 is a well known section that describes extreme times of persecution and hardships. The basic instructions involve being alert, remaining faithful in the face of challenges, and in hearing God's wisdom on how to overcome in persecution. 1Pet.4:7-19 also speaks of faithfully ministering, enduring persecution, standing firm, and responsibilities during tumultuous times.

It is a time to take God and His callings upon our lives very seriously.

Follow that cloud!