



IN THE BEGINNING,
BEAUTY WAS BORN. PRIDE WAS NEXT.

BEFORE THE DAWN

A NOVEL

MICHAEL H. EXTON

www.TheBibleComesAlive.org

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PART ONE

THE INFINITE SILENCE

Chapter 1

The Void

There was nothing.

No light. No darkness. No space to contain either. No time to measure the absence. Only two presences, vast and incomprehensible, existing in a state that no human mind could fathom—because human minds did not yet exist. Nothing did.

They were called, in languages that would not be spoken for billions of years, by different names. One would become known as the Father. The other was the Word.

They moved through non-existence like thoughts through a dreaming mind, their communion deeper than speech, older than silence. They had always been. They would always be. And in the endless expanse of their eternal conversation, something stirred.

An idea.

The Word turned toward the Father—though "turned" implies movement through space, and space did not yet exist—and in that moment of perfect understanding, creation became inevitable.

Chapter 2

First Light

Seven billion years before a carpenter's son would walk beside the Sea of Galilee, the first act of creation rippled through the void.

They were beings of pure spirit, crafted from the essence of the divine itself. Messengers. Servants. Children of a sort, though fashioned rather than born. They blinked into existence by the countless thousands, each one a marvel of design—immortal, powerful, burning with purpose they did not yet fully understand.

Three among them stood apart.

Michael was forged first, his very name a question and a declaration: *Who is like God?* He radiated strength like a sun radiates heat, and from the moment of his first conscious thought, he understood his purpose: to serve, to protect, to lead.

Gabriel came next, his essence intertwined with revelation and proclamation. *God is my strength*, his name declared, and he would carry that strength to the far corners of existence, bearing messages that would shape the destiny of worlds.

But it was the third who drew every eye. The third who blazed so brilliantly that even his fellow angels had to shield themselves from his radiance.

Heylel.

The Shining One.

He was, by any measure, the masterpiece of that first creation. His beauty transcended description—not merely physical, but an emanation of light so pure it seemed to contain all colors and no color at all. When he moved, reality itself seemed to brighten. When he spoke, his voice carried harmonics that made the other angels weep with joy.

Chapter 3

The Canvas

The angels watched.

Four and a half billion years before the first human heart would beat, the Word spoke into the void—and the void answered.

"Let there be."

Reality screamed into existence.

Matter exploded outward from a single point of infinite density, an eruption of creation so violent and beautiful that the assembled hosts of heaven wept and sang and trembled all at once. Galaxies spiraled into being like flowers blooming in cosmic time-lapse. Stars ignited by the trillion, their nuclear fires casting light across distances so vast that the light itself would travel for millions of years before reaching its destination.

And there, in one unremarkable corner of one unremarkable galaxy, a small blue world began to take shape.

"Earth," it was called.

The angels who had been watching in stunned silence suddenly found their voices. They sang—a sound that would echo through

religious texts for millennia, a moment captured in ancient poetry: *The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.*

Michael led the chorus, his powerful voice anchoring the celestial choir. Gabriel wove intricate harmonies that seemed to contain prophecies of things to come. But it was Heylel's voice that soared above them all, a pure note of praise so beautiful that the newly formed stars seemed to pulse in rhythm with it.

Earth spun beneath them, a jewel taking shape in the cosmic darkness. Oceans formed, deep and blue and teeming with potential. Continents rose from the waters, their surfaces erupting with green—grasses, forests, flowers in colors that had never existed before. Mountains thrust toward the sky while rivers carved their patient paths toward the sea.

"It is beautiful," Heylel breathed.

God's response came not in words but in understanding, a knowledge that settled into Heylel's being: this world was his.

Heylel's radiance flickered—just for a moment—with something that might have been the first stirring of pride.

"Mine?"

The understanding deepened. His to govern. His to tend. He was to take a third of his brothers and sisters and make this world their home. To rule it in righteousness, and prepare it for what was to come.

"What is to come, Lord?"

But God only smiled, and in that smile was a mystery that would take billions of years to unfold.

Chapter 4

Paradise

For ages uncounted, Earth knew only joy.

Heylel descended to his new domain with legions of angels at his back, their combined radiance turning night into endless day. They explored every corner of their beautiful world—soaring over crystal seas, racing through mountain passes, discovering wonders that seemed specifically designed to delight them.

The dinosaurs came first—magnificent creatures that the angels watched with fascination as they multiplied and spread across the Earth. Great lumbering giants that shook the ground with each step. Swift hunters that moved like living shadows. Armored beasts and feathered marvels and creatures so strange that even the angels marveled at the Creator's imagination.

"He has made a world of wonders," Gabriel observed during one of his visits from the heavenly realm.

Heylel nodded, but his eyes had taken on a calculating quality that Gabriel did not recognize. "A world," the light-bearer said slowly. "One world, among trillions of stars. Why should we be content with one?"

"Because God gave it to us."

"God gave it to *me*." Heylel's radiance flared, casting sharp shadows across the prehistoric landscape. "And perhaps He was being modest in His gift."

Gabriel felt something cold move through him—an unfamiliar sensation for a being of pure spirit. "Brother, what are you saying?"

"Nothing." Heylel's smile returned, brilliant as ever, but something had changed behind those luminous eyes. "Nothing at all."

Gabriel returned to heaven troubled, carrying with him a warning that he didn't know how to deliver. How do you tell the Creator that His most beautiful creation was beginning to covet more than what he had been given?

Perhaps you don't.

Perhaps God already knew.

Chapter 5

The Whisper

It began as a question.

In the quiet moments between angelic duties, when Heylel sat alone on the highest mountain of Earth and watched the sun set in explosions of orange and purple and gold, the question would surface:

Why should I serve?

He was, after all, the most beautiful of all created beings. His wisdom surpassed that of his brothers. His light outshone even the stars he could see wheeling overhead in the night sky. And yet he was expected to bow. To serve. To remain forever subordinate to a being he had never fully understood.

Below him, great reptiles moved through the prehistoric forests—magnificent creatures, some towering as tall as the trees themselves. And among them walked others: creatures that stood upright on two legs, their forms strangely familiar. They fashioned crude tools from stone, gathered in groups, communicated in grunts and gestures. They resembled what Heylel had seen in the God's distant plans, those future beings called humans. But these were not those beings. These walked and hunted and bred and died like any other animal, for that was what they were—animals, albeit

superior ones. They possessed only the spirit of beasts, the same animating breath that filled the dinosaurs and the crawling things. The spirit of man, that sacred thing the Father spoke of in whispers, had not yet been breathed into any earthly creature.

They worship me, he realized one evening, watching a group of his angels gather below. *When I speak, they listen. When I lead, they follow. Am I not already a god in their eyes?*

The thought should have horrified him. Instead, it warmed him like sunlight.

"You could be more."

Heylel spun, his radiance flaring defensively. But there was no one there. Only the whisper of wind through prehistoric ferns, the distant call of some winged reptile.

And yet he had heard it. A voice. His own voice, speaking words he had not consciously formed.

You could be more.

"I am what I was made to be," he said aloud, but the words felt hollow even as he spoke them.

You were made to shine. But they keep you here, on this single world, when there are galaxies to illuminate. They make you a servant when you were born to be a king.

"The Creator—"

The Creator fears you.

The thought struck Heylel like a physical blow. His radiance dimmed, flickered, and then—impossibly—began to shift. The pure white light that had always defined him took on new colors.

Darker colors. The crimson of flame. The black of a void between stars.

"He does not fear," Heylel whispered. "He is God."

Then why does He restrict you? Why does He place you here, beneath His throne, when you could sit beside it? Why does He guard heaven with such care, if not because He knows what you could become?

Far below, a Tyrannosaurus Rex raised its head and bellowed at the sky, as if sensing that something fundamental had changed in the air.

Heylel looked at his hands—radiant still, but different now. Changed by thoughts that should have been impossible.

"I will not serve forever," he said quietly, and though no one heard him, the universe itself seemed to shudder.

"I will not serve at all."

Chapter 6

War in Heaven

The assault came without warning.

One moment, the heavenly realm existed in its eternal peace—angels going about their sacred duties, the presence of the Father filling every corner of existence with warmth and light. The next moment, a third of all angels surged upward in a wave of corrupted brilliance, their forms twisted by rebellion, their war cries echoing across dimensions.

At their head blazed Heylel—though he was Heylel no longer. His beauty had curdled into something terrible, his light shot through with shadows that seemed to consume rather than illuminate. He had named himself anew: *Satan*. The Adversary.

"TODAY WE TAKE WHAT WAS ALWAYS OURS!" His voice, once pure as crystal, now carried undertones that made the foundations of heaven tremble. "TODAY WE ASCEND!"

Michael moved to intercept, his own radiance blazing to match the corrupted light of his former brother. Around him, loyal angels formed ranks—warriors who had never known war, facing corruption they had never imagined possible.

"Brother," Michael called, his voice carrying across the chaos, "stop this madness! Turn back while forgiveness is still possible!"

Satan's laughter was the most terrible sound Michael had ever heard. "Forgiveness? I do not seek forgiveness! I seek the throne! I will ascend above the heights of the clouds! I will be like the Most High!"

They clashed.

The battle that followed would echo through mythology for millennia. Humans who would one day write of wars among gods—Thor against the giants, Zeus against the Titans—were unknowingly remembering fragments of this single, terrible conflict. Angels fell like stars, their radiance extinguished by corruption. Loyal servants of God gave their very existence to hold the line.

And at the center of it all, two brothers fought.

Michael, who had once loved Heyl above all others, drove his former brother back step by step. Each blow landed sent shockwaves through reality. Each parry created sparks that would someday be mistaken for comets.

"You were the most beautiful of us all," Michael said, tears of pure light streaming down his face. "You had everything. Why wasn't it enough?"

"Because I was made for MORE!" Satan roared. "I was made to rule, not to serve! And if I cannot rule heaven—" He looked down, toward the distant blue marble that had been his domain. "Then I will rule everything else."

Michael raised his sword—a blade of pure divine light. "No, brother. You will rule nothing."

The final blow sent Satan screaming downward, a falling star trailing darkness across the sky. His followers tumbled after him, their descent observed by creatures far below who would later tell their descendants of the night the sky caught fire.

"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven," Jesus would one day tell his disciples.

He had seen it because He had been there, watching from beside His Father, grieving for the brother who had chosen darkness over light.

Chapter 7

The Wasteland

Earth died.

The war's violence spilled across creation, and the beautiful world that had been Heylel's domain paid the price. The skies that had been clear and blue turned black with ash and debris. The oceans that had teemed with life became poisoned graves. The great creatures that had walked the earth—the magnificent dinosaurs, the flying reptiles, the swimming behemoths—all of them perished in the cataclysm. And those upright creatures that had roamed among them, the ones who fashioned tools from stone and resembled the beings yet to come, they too were swept away. Though they had walked like men, they had only ever possessed the spirit of beasts, and like beasts they returned to the dust.

Mountains crumbled. Continents shifted. The very atmosphere became toxic, unbreathable, hostile to every form of life.

But it was not Earth alone that suffered.

The war had raged across the heavens, and the heavens bore the scars. World after world, scattered throughout the vast galaxies, had once gleamed with the same potential as Earth—lush, vibrant, capable of sustaining life in all its magnificent variety. The Father had seeded the universe with beauty, filling it with worlds that

awaited their purpose. Now those worlds lay barren. Atmospheres stripped away or turned to poison. Oceans boiled into nothing or frozen into eternal ice. Mountains of crystal shattered into dust. Forests that had reached toward alien suns reduced to ash that would never settle.

Mars, which had once known flowing waters and skies tinged with color, became a cold red tomb. Venus choked beneath clouds of acid. The moons that had sung with potential fell silent. And beyond this small solar system, across the billions of galaxies that stretched into infinity, countless worlds that might have bloomed with life instead became graveyards of what could have been. The universe itself, once a garden of endless possibility, became a wasteland of rock and radiation and emptiness—a monument to the devastation of angelic war.

And then came the water.

A global deluge covered what remained of Earth, and it became what it would stay for countless eons: a formless void, darkness upon the face of the deep. Not dead, exactly—the physical matter remained—but emptied of everything that had made it beautiful.

This was Satan's prison now.

He and his fallen angels—demons, they would come to be called—drifted through the eternal twilight of a ruined world. Their radiance had dimmed to almost nothing, their beauty twisted beyond recognition. Where they had once sung, they now screamed. Where they had once danced across pristine landscapes, they now writhed in the darkness of the deep.

"This is your kingdom now," Michael had told Satan as the fallen angel plummeted toward his fate. "Rule it well."

But Satan would not accept defeat. Not entirely. Somewhere in the darkness of that ruined world, the Adversary nursed his hatred like

an ember, waiting for the moment when he might fan it back into flame.

"This is not the end," he whispered to his demons as millennia passed in darkness. "God has plans. He always has plans. And when those plans require this world to live again—" His ruined face twisted into something that might have been a smile. "We will be waiting."

Far above, beyond the darkness and the water and the ruins of paradise, the Creator looked down upon what His most beautiful creation had wrought.

And He grieved.

But not without hope.

Because God also had plans.

PART TWO

LET THERE BE

Chapter 8

The Spirit on the Waters

3,964 years before a star would guide wise men to a stable in Bethlehem, the Spirit of God moved across the face of the waters.

It was not a physical movement—not in the way that winds move or currents flow. It was something deeper. Older. A stirring of divine intention, a gathering of power that made the very atoms of the universe hum with anticipation.

In the darkness below, Satan felt it.

He had drifted through the endless depths for so long that time had lost all meaning. His followers had scattered, their corrupted spirits seeping into every shadow of the ruined world. They had become the whispers in the darkness, the cold spots in the endless sea, the formless terrors that existed only to hate.

But now, for the first time since his fall, Satan felt something that made him pay attention.

"He's coming back," he breathed, and his voice created ripples in the primordial waters. "After all this time, He's coming back."

The demons gathered—drawn by their master's summons, emerging from the shadows where they had hidden for eons. They

were pitiable things now, barely recognizable as the radiant angels they had once been. But their hatred remained undimmed.

"What do we do?" one of them asked.

Satan's eyes—still capable of seeing through the darkness that blinded lesser beings—turned upward. Toward the surface. Toward whatever was coming.

"We wait," he said. "And we watch. And when the moment is right—" His lips curled back from teeth that had grown sharp during his long exile. "We destroy."

Chapter 9

Day One

"Let there be light."

The Word spoke, and reality obeyed.

Light exploded across the face of the deep—not the light of suns and stars, which had existed since the universe's birth, but something different. Something that penetrated the darkness Satan had cultivated for so long, something that made the demons shriek and retreat into the deepest trenches of the ruined ocean.

Satan did not retreat.

He rose instead, climbing through the waters toward the surface, drawn toward the light he had once embodied. As he rose, he watched the darkness separate from the light, watched God divide Day from Night with the casual authority of a master artisan.

"Beautiful," Satan whispered, and he almost meant it. "You always did know how to make an entrance."

Above him, invisible to his corrupted sight, God the Father and the Word surveyed their work. They observed Satan watching, for he always watched. It was his nature now. They would let him see what they would build, and let him understand that his fall was not

the end of their story. If he tried to destroy what they created, they would use his destruction for their purposes. As they always had. As they always would.

The adversary's hatred would become, in time, the fire that forged something greater than anything that had come before.

But first, there was work to do.

Chapter 10

Days Two Through Five

The demons watched in horror as their prison transformed around them.

On the second day, the waters divided. Above, a dome of sky appeared—the same brilliant blue that Satan remembered from before his fall. Below, the waters receded, pooling into oceans and lakes and rivers.

"He's rebuilding it," one demon observed, its voice hollow with something that might have been grief. "He's making it beautiful again."

"He's making it for *something else*," Satan corrected. "Can't you feel it? This isn't for us. This isn't even for the angels. This is for something new."

On the third day, land appeared. Continents rose from the seas, their surfaces dry and barren—but not for long. As the demons watched, green spread across the earth like wildfire. Grasses. Trees. Flowers that bloomed in colors so vivid they seemed to hurt to look upon.

"It's more beautiful than before," whispered a demon who had once been named Ashteroth. "How is it more beautiful than before?"

Satan didn't answer. He was too busy trying to understand what he was feeling—an emotion he hadn't experienced since before his fall. It took him several long moments to recognize it.

Envy.

On the fourth day, the sun and moon and stars became visible from Earth's surface—the clouds and debris that had blocked them for eons finally clearing away. Light streamed across the renewed world, and shadows—real shadows, not the corrupted darkness the demons had become—formed beneath trees and mountains.

On the fifth day, life returned to the waters and the skies. Fish of every description filled the seas. Birds wheeled overhead in formations so complex they seemed like living art. The world that had been dead was alive again, thrumming with energy and potential.

"What is He building toward?" Satan demanded, as if the universe owed him an answer. "What comes next?"

The universe, as always, was silent.

But deep in Satan's corrupted being, a suspicion was forming. A terrible, wonderful suspicion that would soon be confirmed.

Chapter 11

Day Six

The sixth day began like the others—with the voice of God reshaping reality. Land animals emerged from the earth as if they had always been there: cattle and creeping things and beasts of every kind. Creatures that resembled the dinosaurs of old, but different. Smaller. More elegant. Better designed.

Satan watched from the shadows of a primordial forest, his corrupted form hidden among the trees. He had grown skilled at concealment during his exile, and he used that skill now to observe without being observed.

There will be more, he thought. There is always more with Him.

And then, in the afternoon light—when the sun hung golden above a world so beautiful it made even demons weep—the Word knelt beside a riverbank and did something He had never done before.

He shaped the clay.

Satan leaned forward, suddenly unable to look away. This was different. The fish, the birds, the animals—they had been spoken into existence with mere words. But this... the Word was taking His time with this. Molding it. Crafting it with His own hands.

The shape that emerged was familiar. Too familiar. Satan felt something that might have been fear as he realized what he was looking at.

The creature was shaped like *them*. Like God.

No, Satan thought. *No, this cannot be. This is just another animal. Another beast. It cannot be—*

Then God breathed.

Satan had been present at the creation of the universe. He had witnessed stars ignite and galaxies form. He had seen wonders that would make human minds crumble into dust. But never—*never*—had he witnessed anything like this.

The breath of God flowed into the clay figure, and where there had been dirt, suddenly there was *life*. Not just animal life—Satan could create that himself, given enough power. This was something else. Something that made the newly formed creature's eyes snap open with recognition. With awareness.

With a *soul*.

"Adam," the Creator said, and the word carried layers of meaning that even Satan, with all his cunning, could not fully unravel. "You are made in Our image. You are made for Our purpose. And you—" the Word's voice broke with an emotion Satan had never heard in it before, "you are very good."

By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. ³ Then God *blessed the seventh day and made it holy*, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.

Chapter 12

The Woman

She was, if possible, even more troubling than the man.

Satan had watched as God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. He had watched as God reached into the man's side and drew out a rib—a piece of Adam himself. And he had watched as God shaped that rib into something magnificent.

The woman.

Where Adam was strong, she was graceful. Where he was solid, she was fluid. They were clearly meant to complement each other, two halves of a single design, and when Adam awoke to find her beside him, the joy on his face was almost painful to behold.

"This is bone of my bones," Adam breathed, "and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Satan observed the scene from his hiding place among the trees, and for the first time since his fall, he felt something other than hatred.

He felt terror.

They are meant to replace us, he realized with growing horror. These creatures—these clay dolls with their borrowed breath—they are meant to take our place. To receive the inheritance that should have been ours.

"What troubles you, master?" Ashteroth slithered up beside him, his corrupted form now resembling a serpent more than an angel.

"Don't you see it?" Satan demanded. "Don't you understand what He's done?"

The demon looked at the two humans, who were now walking hand in hand through the Garden that God had planted for them. "They are weak. Mortal. Made of dirt and water. What threat could they possibly pose?"

"They are made in His image." Satan's voice was cold. "We were made *for* His glory, but they were made *in His likeness*. And if they are obedient—if they do what we would not—" He couldn't finish the sentence. The implications were too horrifying.

Ashteroth understood anyway. "They could become what we might have been."

"They could become what we only dreamed of becoming," Satan corrected. "Gods. Heirs. *Sons* of the Most High."

A long silence fell between them.

"Then we must ensure," Ashteroth said slowly, "that they are not obedient."

Satan's gaze found the two humans again, so innocent, so trusting, so utterly unaware of the darkness watching them.

"Yes," he said. "We must ensure exactly that."

Chapter 13

The Garden

Eden was paradise incarnate.

A river flowed from somewhere hidden, dividing into four headwaters that spread the gift of life across the garden. Trees of every kind grew there—fruit trees with branches heavy laden, shade trees with leaves so green they seemed to glow, flowering trees that perfumed the air with scents that made even the angels sigh.

But two trees stood apart.

The first grew at the very center of the Garden, its bark silver, its leaves gold, its fruit glowing with an inner light that pulsed like a heartbeat. This was the Tree of Life, and its presence hummed with eternity. Adam and Eve walked past it every day, sometimes pausing to admire its beauty, not yet understanding its significance.

The second tree grew nearby, but its beauty was different—darker somehow, more seductive. Its fruit gleamed with colors that shifted when you looked at them, and its leaves whispered secrets in a language that was almost comprehensible.

This was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

"You may eat from any tree in the Garden," God had told them, "but from that tree you shall not eat. For in the day you eat of it, you shall surely die."

Adam and Eve had nodded, accepting the prohibition without question. They had so much—why would they need more? The Garden provided everything: food, water, shelter, beauty, companionship. They had each other. They had God, who walked with them in the cool of the day, answering their questions, delighting in their discoveries.

They had everything except knowledge of the one thing that could destroy them.

Satan watched and waited and planned.

Chapter 14

The Serpent

The serpent was, in those days, the most beautiful of all beasts.

It walked upright, its scales gleaming with iridescent colors that caught the light and shattered it into rainbows. It was clever, too—more clever than any other animal in the Garden—and Eve had taken a particular liking to it. She would often seek it out during her explorations, finding pleasure in its company.

Which is exactly what Satan had counted on.

Possession was difficult for demons—it required a willing host, or at least a host whose defenses could be overcome. But the serpent's cleverness made it proud, and pride created openings. Satan slipped into the creature's mind like water seeping through cracks in a dam, and suddenly he was looking at the Garden through the serpent's jeweled eyes.

Patience, he counseled himself. This cannot be rushed. If I approach too quickly, she will sense the danger. I must be subtle. I must be the serpent in truth.

Days passed. Then weeks. The serpent continued to appear when Eve walked alone, always pleasant, always curious, always asking questions that seemed innocent but planted seeds of doubt.

"Has God really said you shall not eat of *any* tree of the Garden?"

Eve laughed. "No, of course not! We may eat of any tree—all except one. The one in the middle of the Garden. God said if we eat of it, or even touch it, we will die."

Satan noted the addition—*or even touch it*—and filed it away. Eve had exaggerated God's command, which meant she had been *thinking* about it. Wondering about it. Perhaps resenting it, just a little.

Good.

"You will not surely die," the serpent said, and its voice was honey and silk and everything comforting. "God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Him, knowing good and evil."

Eve looked at the tree—really looked at it, for perhaps the first time.

It is beautiful, she thought. And the fruit does look delicious. And to become wise—to truly understand things—what could be wrong with that?

The serpent said nothing more. It had played its part. Now the seed it had planted would do the rest.

Chapter 15

The Fall

She took.

She ate.

And in that moment, everything changed.

Eve's eyes widened as knowledge crashed over her like a wave—knowledge she hadn't known she was missing, understanding she hadn't known she lacked. She suddenly *saw* things.

And she saw herself.

Naked, she realized with sudden shame. *Vulnerable. Exposed.*

"Adam!" She ran to find her husband, the forbidden fruit still clutched in her hand. When she found him, she spoke quickly, the words tumbling out in a rush of excitement and terror. "You must try this. You must understand what I now understand."

Adam looked at the fruit. He looked at his wife. He looked at the serpent, which had followed Eve at a distance, its eyes glittering with something that might have been triumph.

He knew what the fruit was. He knew what God had commanded. And unlike Eve, he had not been deceived—he understood exactly what he was doing.

He reached out anyway.

He took.

He ate.

And in the cool of the evening, when God came walking through the Garden as He always did, He found Adam and Eve hiding among the trees, their bodies covered with hastily woven fig leaves, their faces twisted with an emotion they had never experienced before.

Fear.

"Where are you?" God called, though He already knew.

"I heard Your voice in the Garden," Adam answered, "and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

And Adam, the first man, looked at his wife, and then at his Creator, and spoke words that would echo through human history for millennia to come:

"The woman You gave me—*she* gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate."

Blame. Deflection. Refusal to accept responsibility.

Satan, watching from the shadows, smiled for the first time since his fall.

They are perfect, he thought. They will be just like us.

Chapter 16

The Curse

God turned to the serpent.

Satan felt the divine gaze like fire against his corrupted spirit. He tried to flee, to abandon the serpent's body and escape, but he found himself held in place by a power that brooked no defiance.

"Because you have done this," God said, and His voice carried sorrow as deep as eternity, "you are cursed above all livestock and all wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel."

Satan reeled from the words. *He will crush your head*—what did that mean? What offspring? What—

But God had already turned away.

To the woman, He said: "I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Eve wept—perhaps the first tears ever shed in creation.

To the man, God said: "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you will return."

Adam bowed his head, accepting the judgment.

But God was not finished. He clothed them in skins—the first death in creation, innocent blood shed to cover human shame—and led them to the eastern edge of Eden.

"Now that mankind has become like Us, knowing good and evil," God said, "they must not be allowed to reach out their hands and take also from the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever."

Cherubim appeared—mighty angels with flaming swords—and took their positions at the Garden's entrance.

And Adam and Eve, the parents of all humanity, walked out into a world that would never again be paradise.

Behind them, in the shadows of the now-forbidden Garden, Satan gathered his strength.

The woman's offspring, he thought. A future enemy. A future threat.

A future target.

PART THREE

BLOOD AND FIRE

Chapter 17

Cain

The first murder happened in a field, under a clear sky, between two brothers.

Cain was the firstborn—a farmer, a tiller of the ground, a man who resented the curse that made his work so hard. He brought offerings to God from the fruit of his labor, but something was wrong with his gifts. Not the offerings themselves, perhaps, but the heart behind them. When God looked with favor upon Abel's sacrifice but not on Cain's, something dark began to grow.

Satan recognized that darkness. He had felt it himself, once.

"Why are you angry?" God asked Cain. "Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Cain did not master it.

"Let's go out to the field," he said to his brother, and Abel, trusting and young and innocent, followed him.

He never came back.

Satan watched the murder from the shadows, and he felt something he hadn't experienced since before his fall: hope. If humans could kill each other—if they could embrace darkness of their own free will—then perhaps God's plan, whatever it was, could still be thwarted.

They are just like us, Satan thought again, watching Cain stare at his brother's blood on his hands. *They fall just as we did. They choose death just as we did.*

Perhaps they always will.

Chapter 18

The Descent

The generations that followed proved Satan right.

Men multiplied upon the earth, and with them, evil multiplied too. The murder of Abel was only the beginning. Soon, humans were killing each other over land, over resources, over jealousy and pride and rage. They invented new ways to cause pain, new tools for destruction, new methods of oppression.

And they found the demons.

It happened gradually at first. A whisper here, a dark dream there. Some humans proved more susceptible than others—those with anger in their hearts, or greed, or lust for power. They reached out to the darkness, and the darkness reached back.

Satan assigned his most cunning servants to the task. Some demons appeared as gods, demanding worship and sacrifice. Others whispered secrets—forbidden knowledge that humans were not meant to possess. Still others possessed the willing and used human bodies to spread corruption.

"The wickedness of humanity is great," Gabriel reported to heaven. "Every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts is only evil all the time."

The Father listened. The Son listened.

And they grieved.

Chapter 19

Nephilim

Giants walked the earth—the Nephilim, they were called. They were mighty. Powerful. And utterly without conscience.

The violence that followed made Cain's murder look like a minor disagreement.

Satan watched the chaos unfold with glee. He had not planned this particular corruption, but he would certainly use it. The more twisted humanity became, the less likely God would be to salvage them.

Perhaps, Satan thought, He will simply destroy them all. Perhaps He will finally admit that this experiment—these fragile creatures made of dirt and breath—was a mistake.

Chapter 20

Noah

One man remained righteous.

His name was Noah, and he was everything his generation was not: just, upright, faithful. He walked with God in an age when most humans had forgotten God existed. He raised his sons to honor the old ways, even as the world around them descended into a nightmare.

"I'm going to destroy them," God told Noah one day, appearing to him in a way that had become rare since the Garden. "All flesh has corrupted their way on the earth. The end of all flesh has come before Me. But you—like Abel and Enoch before you—have found grace in My eyes."

Noah fell to his knees, trembling.

"Build an ark," God continued. "A massive ship, larger than anything humans have ever constructed. I will tell you its dimensions, and I will tell you what to bring aboard. Because I am going to send a flood to destroy all life under the heavens—every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish."

"Everything?" Noah whispered.

"Everything." God's voice carried infinite sadness. "But I will establish My covenant with you. You will enter the ark—you and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And you will bring two of every 'unclean' living creature, male and female, to keep them alive with you. And seven of every 'clean' animal, male and female."

Noah looked out at the world around him. A world of violence and corruption and unimaginable evil.

"Yes, Eternal," he said. "I will do everything You command."

It would take him a hundred and twenty years.

Chapter 21

The Warning

For over a century, Noah built.

He preached too—warning anyone who would listen about the judgment to come. But no one listened. The world was too far gone for warnings, too corrupt for repentance. People mocked him, laughed at him, attacked him. They called him a madman building a boat on dry land, a fool chasing fantasies.

"There has never been a flood," they said. "Why would there be one now?"

"Because God has spoken," Noah replied. "And what God speaks, He accomplishes."

Satan watched the ark take shape with growing unease. He had assumed the flood was a bluff—a threat intended to frighten humans into obedience. But decade after decade, the massive vessel grew, and Noah showed no signs of giving up.

"Perhaps we should stop him," Ashteroth suggested.

"We have tried." Satan's voice was bitter. "The man is protected. Every demon who approaches too closely is driven back by... something. Some power we cannot overcome."

"Michael?"

"Perhaps. Or perhaps something greater." Satan stared at the ark, trying to understand what he was seeing. "He means to do it. He actually means to destroy them all."

"Then we win," Ashteroth said. "Don't we? If humanity is destroyed—"

"No." Satan's eyes narrowed. "Don't you see? He's saving eight. Eight humans will survive. Eight humans who are righteous, who walk with God, who will begin again."

"Then the cycle continues."

"Yes." Satan turned away from the ark, his mind racing. "The cycle continues. And we must find a way to break it."

Chapter 22

The Rain

The day the animals came, no one was laughing anymore.

They arrived in pairs—creatures from every corner of the earth, guided by an unseen hand, filing into the massive vessel with perfect order. Lions walked beside lambs. Eagles flew alongside sparrows. Great elephants and tiny mice, thundering herds and slithering serpents, beasts of every description.

Noah and his family watched in awe as God fulfilled His word.

"Get aboard," God commanded when the last animals were settled. "In seven days, I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made."

Noah obeyed. His wife, his sons, and their wives followed. The great door of the ark swung shut.

For seven days, nothing happened. The sky remained clear. The sun rose and set. People began to laugh again, pointing at the sealed vessel, mocking the family trapped inside.

On the eighth day, the fountains of the great deep burst forth.

Water exploded from beneath the earth—geysers that shot miles into the air, carrying with them the ancient waters that had been stored since creation. The sky tore open and rain fell—not normal rain, but sheets of water so thick that day became indistinguishable from night.

The laughter stopped quickly.

Satan watched from a high place as the waters rose, as humans and demons alike scrambled for higher ground that kept disappearing beneath the waves. The Nephilim—those mighty giants who had terrorized the earth—thrashed in the churning waters, their strength meaningless against the judgment of God.

He's actually doing it, Satan thought, something like respect mixing with his hatred. He's actually destroying them all.

For forty days and forty nights, the rain continued.

When it finally stopped, there was no dry land anywhere on earth. The highest mountains had vanished beneath the waves. Every living thing that breathed air—every human, every animal, every bird—was dead.

Except for eight people floating in a wooden vessel, caring for the creatures that would repopulate the world.

The demons, of course, survived too. Spiritual beings have no need for air.

But they were alone now, in a world of endless water, with nothing to corrupt except each other.

Satan sank into the depths and waited.

Chapter 23

A New Beginning

The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.

Noah sent out a raven, then a dove. When the dove returned with an olive branch, he knew the waters were receding. When it didn't return at all, he knew the earth was ready.

"Come out of the ark," God commanded. "You and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it."

Noah obeyed. His family stepped onto dry land—transformed, different from what it had been, but recognizably earth nonetheless. The animals scattered to the corners of the world, driven by instinct to find their proper habitats.

And Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices to God.

The smoke rose into a sky that was still strange and new, washed clean by divine judgment. God smelled the pleasing aroma and made a covenant—not just with Noah, but with all of humanity yet to come.

"Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

A rainbow appeared in the sky—the first one, in a world that had never seen rain before the flood.

"This is the sign of the covenant I am making between Me and you and every living creature with you," God said. "Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant."

Satan watched the rainbow from his hiding place in the shadows and understood what it meant.

No more floods. No more total destruction. God had bound Himself, limited His own options.

He's giving them another chance, Satan realized. No matter how evil they become, He won't destroy them all again.

Which meant the battle would have to be fought differently.

One soul at a time.

Chapter 24

Nimrod

Three generations after the flood, a hunter was born who would change everything.

His name was Nimrod, great-grandson of Noah, and from his earliest years, it was clear that he was different. While other children played, Nimrod practiced with weapons. While others dreamed of farming and families, Nimrod dreamed of conquest.

He was, according to the records that would survive, "a mighty hunter before the Lord." But the word "before" in this context meant something closer to "against." Nimrod hunted, yes—but he also built. Cities rose at his command: Babel, Erech, Akkad, Calneh. And from those cities, he spread his influence into Assyria, building more: Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen.

Satan watched this human with particular interest.

"He is proud," Ashteroth observed. "Prideful and ambitious. Perhaps he could be useful."

"More than useful," Satan replied. "He could be magnificent."

They approached Nimrod in dreams at first—whispering suggestions, stoking his already considerable ego. Then, as he proved receptive, they appeared to him directly.

"You could be a god," they told him. "You could rule not just cities, but the hearts of men. You could build a kingdom that would last forever."

Nimrod's eyes gleamed with ambition. "Tell me how."

And they did.

Chapter 25

The Tower

The Tower of Babel was Nimrod's masterpiece—and Satan's greatest triumph since the Garden.

It rose from the Plain of Shinar like an artificial mountain, its base covering acres, its peak piercing the heavens. Thousands of workers labored on its construction, slaves and freemen alike, all united by a single language and a single terrible purpose.

"Come, let us build ourselves a city," the people said, "with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

Make a name for ourselves.

Satan savored those words. They were the echoes of his own ancient rebellion in heaven: *I will make myself like the Most High.*

But the tower was far more than architecture. It was a temple—a massive ziggurat engineered for the world's first system of false worship. Nimrod and his queen, Semiramis, were already embedding their own names into the sacred bricks. Satan watched with dark satisfaction as the trap was laid. Here, the queen would soon be venerated as the "mother goddess," and her future son, Tammuz, would be heralded as a counterfeit "son of god."

With every stone laid, a throne was built for a mother and child of their own invention, designed to eclipse the Throne of the Creator.

Chapter 26

The Foundation of Confusion

The vast, crystalline expanse above the Plain of Shinar was silent, but for Michael and Gabriel, the silence was heavy with the weight of what was unfolding below. Nimrod, the "mighty hunter," was no longer just hunting beasts; he was beginning to trap the minds of men in an equation of his own making.

Michael's wings remained still, his eyes fixed on the growing ziggurat of Babel. "The Adversary has changed his tactics," he said, his voice echoing with the authority of the third heaven. "He no longer seeks to destroy them with fire or flood. He is using something far more dangerous: a counterfeit of the Truth."

Gabriel stood beside him, his expression one of cold, analytical precision. "It is a mathematical corruption, Michael. He is taking the reality of God and the Word and adding a third variable—a human variable. Look at the queen, Semiramis. She is already whispering of a divine motherhood, a mystery that turns the focus from the Throne to the cradle. By the time they are done, the people will not worship the Creator; they will worship a mother and a child of their own invention."

"It is the blueprint for the next four thousand years," Michael replied, his gaze narrowing. "If they can convince the people that the Godhead is a confusing mystery of three-in-one, the people will stop searching for the Father. They will accept the tradition of the priest over the Word. They will trade the Sabbath for the day of the sun, and the Father's appointed festivals for the spring rites of Ishtar and the winter solstices of Tammuz."

Gabriel watched as the smoke of Nimrod's altars rose toward the firmament, tracking the intricate symbols being carved into the stones at the base of the tower. The Mystery was beginning not with a whisper, but with the rhythmic strike of a stone-cutter's mallet against the sun-drenched plains.

"They are already branding themselves," Gabriel said, his voice like the sharpening of a blade. "Look at the symbol of the 'T'—the initial of Tammuz. The Adversary knows the power of a sign. Semiramis is taking the first initial of her son's name and turning it into an object of worship. Thousands of years from now, men and women will cling to those crosses, wearing them around their necks, thinking they honor the Word, while they are actually wearing the sigil—the occult symbol—of Nimrod's line."

Michael stepped closer to the edge of the celestial vantage point. "And the timing, Gabriel? The Adversary is meticulous with the calendar."

"He is," Gabriel replied. "He is anchoring their worship to the cycles of the SUN. He has them celebrating the rebirth of the sun at the Winter Solstice—a festival that centuries later will be rebranded as Christmas. He has them observing the fertility rites of Ishtar—Easter—at the Spring Equinox, using pagan icons to shroud the corruption of God's true plan. They will think they are celebrating life, but they will be participating in the ancient heathen mysteries of Semiramis, Nimrod, and Tammuz."

"The most subtle theft is time itself," Michael noted. "The Word set the Seventh Day—the Sabbath—as a sanctuary in time, a sign between Him and His people. But Nimrod points them toward the First Day of the week—the Day of the Sun. By shifting the day, the Adversary ensures that even when they think they seek the Creator, they stand in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Gabriel looked at the bustling city of Babylon, his gaze penetrating the centuries yet to come. "It is a masterwork of confusion, Michael. A system so vast and deeply rooted that it will span empires. From this plain, it will flow into Egypt, into Rome, and eventually into the very cathedrals of the modern world."

"What shall we call it in the record?" Michael asked.

Gabriel paused, the weight of the name hanging in the air. "We shall call it what it is: Mystery, Babylon the Great. The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. It is the counterfeit kingdom that will attempt to stand—until the Lion of Judah returns to tear it down."

"Then the Workman will face a difficult task," Michael said. "He must strip away the holidays, the symbols, and the Sunday traditions just to find the foundation. He will have to show them that the 'X' in Xmas isn't merely a shorthand letter—it is a literal cross-out of the Truth."

"The few who find it," Gabriel said, "will be those who refuse to let tradition override the Word. The war is no longer in the heights; it is in the definitions. And the Adversary is a master of the dictionary."

"They will be called insane," Michael noted quietly, his hand resting on the hilt of his sword. "They will be told they follow a lonely path. But a Watchman does not seek the approval of the people he warns. He only seeks to be right when the starting gun fires. The darkness of Nimrod's shadow will stretch all the way to

the end, but the Light of the Word will always be there for the one willing to do the labor of proving it."

The two angels watched as the ziggurat of Babel loomed like a jagged wound against the horizon. The stones were laid—a monument to a system that would one day rule the world under a different name, but with the same ancient, corrupted math. The war had moved from the stars to the hearts of men, and the first battle of the Great Deception had begun.

Chapter 27

The Fractured Tongue of the Great Scattering

God came down.

Not in judgment this time—He had promised no more floods—but in observation. He walked unseen through the streets of Babel, watching His creation build monuments to false gods, listening to their unified language spreading corruption like a contagion.

"If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this," He said, "then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."

Satan felt the shift in the air before he understood its weight.

"Come, let Us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

The Word spoke, and reality obeyed.

One moment, every human on earth spoke the same tongue. The next, they were babbling in dozens—hundreds—of different languages, none comprehensible to the other.

The construction of the tower halted instantly. Workers couldn't understand foremen. Foremen couldn't understand administrators. The grand project collapsed into chaos as neighbors suddenly became strangers.

"What did You do?" Satan screamed at the firmament. "They were almost mine!"

There was no answer. There never was, when the Adversary demanded one.

But the consequence was absolute. The unified humanity that had nearly built a stairway to heaven—that had nearly secured a global empire of false worship—was scattered to the winds. Families bound by shared tongues gathered together and migrated away from Babel, spreading across the earth just as God had originally commanded.

Yet, the false religion went with them. The names shifted with the dialects, but the lies remained identical: worship the sun-god, bow to the mother goddess, venerate the divine son, and sacrifice children to appease the gods of fire and harvest.

Satan had lost the battle for immediate global control.

But the war was far from over.

Appendix A

The Historical Record: Unmasking the Babylonian Roots

BABYLON MYSTERY RELIGION

Nimrod established the world's first empire over 4,000 years ago, with himself as its first emperor. Afterwards, he and his wife (queen Semiramis) invent the world's first false religion—the Babylon Mystery Religion—as Nimrod proclaims himself to be a god (the sun-god) and his wife a goddess (the dawn goddess). Their subjects then worship them as divine beings. As a result, many cultures would thereafter address royalty as “my Sun”!

THE TRINITY

Years later Nimrod is killed, but Semiramis gives birth to a son whom she names Tammuz. She then claims that Tammuz is actually her husband (Nimrod) reincarnated (or resurrected) back to life. Tammuz is also then worshiped as a god. Eventually the

three (Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz) would be worshiped as one god—that is—they would be worshiped as three divine individuals who make up just one being—three in one and one in three. In other words, they would be worshiped as a triune god—the trinity!

The Roman Catholic Church then adopted this false pagan teaching in 325 AD at the First Council of Nicaea—about 225 years after the Bible was completed. God is NOT a trinity! The trinity was NEVER taught by Christ, the apostles, or any early Christians. And the Bible does NOT support it, nor is it ever even mentioned in the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church simply replaced the name of Tammuz with Jesus, Nimrod with God the Father, and Semiramis with the Holy Spirit.

MOTHER & CHILD WORSHIP

Besides the trinity, the Roman Catholic Church also adopted from the PAGAN religions of the world is the way it often portrays Jesus Christ. This false apostate church often depicts Jesus as a baby in the arms of his mother Mary, just as Tammuz was often displayed as a baby in the arms of his mother Semiramis. In this case the Roman Church simply calls Tammuz by the name of Jesus and Semiramis by the name of Mary. In some cases, they have even used the same ancient pagan statutes of Tammuz and Semiramis and just renamed them!

And the Catholic Church worships Mary, just as the pagans worshiped Semiramis—their mother goddess—the mother of god—even though the Bible condemns such worship—not to mention the use of idols—which God strongly condemns!

CROSSES

The Roman Catholic Church also borrowed from the Babylon Mystery Religion the wearing of crosses—which heathens first started wearing about 4,000 years ago! The cross is simply the letter T (or t)—which is the initial for Tammuz. The letter T also stands for Typhon and Teitan—names for Satan in the ancient Babylonian and Greek languages.

Side Note: The Spanish conquistadors were absolutely shocked and amazed to see the natives wearing crosses when they first set foot on Mexican soil about 500 hundred years ago!

SUNDAY OR SATURDAY?

The Roman Catholic Church is just a modern version of the Babylon Mystery Religion (and the Protestant churches aren't much better). This false church has simply replaced the pagan names associated with MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT (see Revelation 17:5) with Christian sounding names to deceive the masses. Its day of worship is SUNday—the day that pagans have always worshiped the SUN or the SUN-god. And in the 3rd century AD, the Roman Catholic Church would replace God's true Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week, Saturday, with the pagan day of worship, Sunday.

XMAS

The Roman Catholic Church also celebrates a holiday it calls Xmas on December 25th as the day of Christ's birth (when in fact Christ was born in late September or early October). Plus, the Bible NEVER tells us to celebrate His birth anyway. But according to some historians Tammuz (or Nimrod) was born on December 25th!

Xmas is NOT a Christian celebration at all, as it was first celebrated about 2,000 years BEFORE Jesus was ever born! In ancient times it was called Saturnalia or the Birthday of Sol Invictus (birthday of the invincible sun)—a holiday in honor of the sun (or the sun-god)! For about 300 years the Roman Church thoroughly CONDEMNED this ancient HEATHEN holiday! It wasn't until at least the 4th century that the Roman Catholic Church gave in and adopted this festival as its own, and then quickly changed its name to Xmas!

EASTER

And Easter is no different! The Bible NEVER tells us to celebrate Easter or the resurrection of Christ—though it does tell us to observe His death annually each year at the Passover (or Lord's Supper).

Like Xmas, Easter is also a heathen festival that dates back approximately 4,000 years. This pagan celebration was named in honor of a pagan goddess—Semiramis! The name of this pagan goddess in ancient England was Eastre or Eostre (hence, the name "Easter" today). Of course, in other languages she was called by

different names (such as Ostara, Austra, Austro, Aurora, Ausos, Astarte, Ashtoreth, Asherah, Ishtar, Isis, Diana, Inanna, Aphrodite, and Venus).

EASTER was considered the goddess of dawn, the goddess of sex (or fertility), and the goddess of spring. Her name as Ausos (in the Proto-Indo-European religion) means “SHINING ONE.” This is the exact same meaning of the word “Heylel”—the Hebrew word found in Isaiah 14:12 that is sometimes translated into English as LUCIFER! As a matter of fact, some translations of the Bible (such as the YLT and BBE) translate Heylel as “shining one,” while others translate it as Lucifer (such as the KJV, NKJV, and RHE)!

Also, in Lithuanian (as “Ausrine”) she is considered the goddess of the “morning star,” which is precisely what “shining one” is referring to!

As a matter of fact, some translations of the Bible translate the Hebrew word “Heylel” into English as “morning star” (instead of “shining one” or “Lucifer”). “How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn” (Isaiah 14:12; NIV). And some translations render this same verse as “shining morning star” (CSB) or “bright morning star” (NIRV; GNT).

But what “star” are they referring to (in the expression “BRIGHT MORNING STAR”)? Well, not a star at all, but a planet—the planet Venus, which was once considered a star. Why Venus? Because (other than the sun and moon) Venus is the BRIGHTEST celestial body in the sky and it appears in the eastern sky in the MORNING (first appearing about an hour or so before sunrise and then disappearing once the sun rises). This is also why it’s sometimes referred to as the “light-bearer” or “light-bringer” as it appears to be escorting the sun to the earth each morning.

“Easter” then is synonymous with Lucifer! That is—SATAN the DEVIL! In Hebrew she was known as “Ashtoreth” or “Asherah” (and is sometimes referred to as “the queen of heaven”). The male version of her name is Astaroth—“the crowned prince of hell”; “a

very powerful arch-demon.” And in Akkadian (the extremely ancient Babylonian and Assyrian language) this “dawn, spring and sex goddess” was called ISHTAR—*pronounced exactly as we pronounce “Easter” today!*

Finally, the ancient pagans celebrated Easter in worship of Nimrod & Tammuz, as they believed that Nimrod was reincarnated (or resurrected) back to life as Tammuz. And they also worshiped Semiramis (Easter) on this day—since she was the one who gave birth to Tammuz—therefore she was considered “the mother of god,” and “the mother goddess.”

Side Note: Nimrod (or Tammuz) may have died on a *Friday*, as most people believe that Jesus died on a Friday—when in fact the Bible plainly shows that Jesus was crucified on a *Thursday* and NOT on a Friday (see Luke 24:1, 13, 20-21).

Appendix B

The Great Deceiver

SATAN DOMINATES THE CURRENT
WORLDLY SYSTEM AND
SYSTEMATICALLY MISLEADS HUMANITY

Satan's Authority as Ruler & “God” of This World

These verses establish that Satan exercises temporary control, dominion, and spiritual authority over the systems of the earth, including all of the religious institutions of the world — even including mainstream “Christianity”!

- **John 12:31** – “Now is the judgment of this world; now the **ruler of this world** will be cast out.”
- **John 14:30** – “I will no longer talk much with you, for the **ruler of this world** is coming, and he has nothing in Me.”
- **John 16:11** – “of judgment, because the **ruler of this world** is judged.”
- **Ephesians 2:2** – “in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the**

power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."

- **Ephesians 6:12** – "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the **rulers of the darkness of this age**, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."
- **Luke 4:5-6** – "Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for **this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.**'"
- **1 John 5:19** – "We know that we are of God, and the **whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.**"
- **2 Corinthians 4:4** – "whose minds the **god of this age** has blinded, who do not believe..."

Satan's Deception & Blindness of the Whole World

These verses demonstrate how Satan actively tricks, blinds, counterfeits truth, and misleads humanity on a global scale.

- **Revelation 12:9** – "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, **who deceives the whole world...**"
- **Revelation 20:3** – "...so that he should **deceive the nations no more** till the thousand years were finished..."

- **Revelation 20:8** – "and will go out to **deceive the nations** which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle..."
- **Revelation 20:10** – "The **devil, who deceived them**, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone..."
- **2 Corinthians 4:4** – "...whose minds the god of this age **has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel... should shine on them.**"
- **2 Corinthians 11:3** – "But I fear, lest somehow, **as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness**, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
- **2 Corinthians 11:14** – "And no wonder! For **Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.**"
- **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10** – "The coming of the lawless one is **according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception** among those who perish..."
- **1 Timothy 4:1** – "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to **deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**"
- **2 Timothy 2:26** – "and that they may come to their senses and **escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.**"
- **Acts 26:18** – "to open their eyes, in order to **turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God...**"

Satan infiltrates, counterfeits, and misleads religious structures — specifically targeting the visible, mainstream Christian professing community.

1. COUNTERFEIT MINISTERS & PREACHERS

The Bible warns that Satan does not always appear as an obvious force of evil; instead, he operates through mainstream religious leaders who look and sound genuinely Christian.

- **2 Corinthians 11:13–15** – "For such are **false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ**. And no wonder! For **Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light**. Therefore it is no great thing if **his ministers also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness**, whose end will be according to their works."

2. DOCTRINES OF DEMONS WITHIN THE CHURCH

Paul explicitly states that major spiritual deceptions will arise from *within* the professing faith, leading many astray through false religious teachings.

- **1 Timothy 4:1** – "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times **some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...**"

3. A COUNTERFEIT “JESUS” & “GOSPEL”

Paul expressed deep concern that mainstream believers would easily accept a corrupted form of Christianity, a different spirit, and a modified version of Jesus.

- **2 Corinthians 11:3–4** – "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes **preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted**—you may well put up with it!"

4. COUNTERFEIT CHURCHES — The “Synagogue of Satan”

In the letters to the early churches, Christ Himself warns that institutions claiming to be the true people of God can actually belong to the devil.

- **Revelation 2:9** – "...and I know the blasphemy of **those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.**" (*Note: In the New Testament context, true "Jews" are often defined spiritually as true believers—Romans 2:28-29*).
- **Revelation 3:9** – "Indeed I will make **those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie**—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet..."

5. GLOBAL RELIGIOUS DECEPTION — The False Prophet

Prophecy shows that a massive, global religious system will arise under Satan's direct empowerment, completely deceiving the earth through miraculous religious signs.

- **Revelation 13:11–14** – "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and **he had two horns like a lamb [looking Christian/messianic] and spoke like a dragon [speaking Satan's words]**. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence... **He performs**

great signs... And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do..."

6. WIDESPREAD “LORD, LORD” PROFESSING BELIEVERS

Jesus Himself warned that the *majority* of people who publicly claim Him as Lord and perform religious works in His name are actually practicing lawlessness and do not know Him.

- **Matthew 7:21–23** – "Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven... **Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’** And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’"

7. WOLVES IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING

The Original Warning from Jesus

Jesus warns His followers to watch out for religious figures who appear gentle and godly on the outside but are destructive on the inside.

- **Matthew 7:15** – "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in **sheep’s clothing**, but inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**."

Infiltration of the Local Church Leadership

The Apostle Paul warns church elders that these destructive spiritual predators will not just come from the outside, but will actually arise from *within* their own mainstream church congregations.

- **Acts 20:29–30** – "For I know this, that after my departure **savage wolves** will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also **from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things**, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

Believers Sent Out Among the Wolves

Jesus also uses this imagery to describe the dangerous environment His true disciples face when confronting a hostile, deceived religious world.

- **Matthew 10:16** – "Behold, I send you out as **sheep in the midst of wolves**. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."
- **Luke 10:3** – "Go your way; behold, I send you out as **lambs among wolves**."

To effectively identify and expose these spiritual predators, the New Testament provides an explicit blueprint.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOLVES

The Apostles Peter and Jude write extensive, uncompromised descriptions of what these deceptive religious figures look like behind closed doors.

1. Driven by Greed & Exploitation

They view ministry as a commercial enterprise and exploit the faith of mainstream believers for personal financial gain.

- **2 Peter 2:3** – "By **covetousness** they will **exploit you with deceptive words**; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."
- **Jude 1:11** – "Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, **have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit**, and perished in the rebellion of Korah."

2. Sexually Immoral & Feast with the Church

They use their religious authority to indulge in hidden lusts while boldly participating in church fellowships and potlucks.

- **2 Peter 2:13–14** – "...They are **spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you**, having eyes **full of adultery** and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls."
- **Jude 1:12** – "These are **spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves**. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit..."

3. Arrogant, Divisive, and Grumbling

They reject godly authority, boast about themselves, complain constantly, and create factions within the church.

- **2 Peter 2:10** – "...They are **presumptuous, self-willed**. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries..."
- **Jude 1:16** – "These are **grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words**, flattering people to gain advantage."

- **Jude 1:19** – "These are **sensual persons, who cause divisions**, not having the Spirit."

HOW THE BIBLE TELLS TRUE BELIEVERS TO SPOT THEM

God does not leave His people defenseless. The New Testament provides three specific tests to strip away the "sheep's clothing."

Test 1: The "Fruit" Test (Character & Lifestyle)

Jesus commands believers to look past a preacher's words and miracles, and instead evaluate the long-term spiritual outcome of their lifestyle and teachings.

- **Matthew 7:16–20** – "**You will know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit... **Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**"

Test 2: The "Doctrine" Test (The Message of Christ)

The Apostle John provides a theological baseline. A wolf will subtly change or deny the true biblical identity, incarnation, and authority of Jesus Christ.

- **1 John 4:1–3** – "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.** By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God."

- **2 John 1:9–10** – "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God... If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him..."

Test 3: The "Scripture" Test (The Berean Method)

The believers in Berea were praised because they did not take the Apostle Paul's words at face value. They rigorously measured everything they heard against the written Word of God.

- **Acts 17:11** – "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and **searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.**"

The New Testament does not advocate for passive toleration or "agreeing to disagree" when a spiritual predator is exposed. Because wolves actively destroy faith, the instructions are decisive, urgent, and highly protective.

1. "Mark" & "Avoid" Them

Believers are commanded to publicly identify those who preach false doctrines and completely cut off social and spiritual alignment with them.

- **Romans 16:17–18** – "Now I urge you, brethren, **note [mark] those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.** For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."

2. Do Not Host or Welcome Them

To protect the home and the local fellowship, John commands believers not to give false teachers a platform, hospitality, or even a casual blessing that validates their work.

- **2 John 1:10–11** – "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, **do not receive him into your house nor greet him**; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."

3. "Turn Away" & Withdraw from Them

When religious leaders hold onto a superficial form of godliness but deny its true power through their compromised lifestyle, believers must sever ties.

- **2 Timothy 3:5** – "...having a form of godliness but denying its power. **And from such people turn away!**"
- **1 Timothy 6:3–5** – "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words... **from such withdraw yourself.**"

4. Reject Them After Warning Them

Paul gives a specific protocol for dealing with divisive, wolf-like figures within the church structure. If they refuse to correct their behavior after a couple of warnings, they must be cast out.

- **Titus 3:10–11** – "**Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition**, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned."

5. Rebuke Them Sharply

Silencing a wolf requires direct, public truth to prevent them from ruining entire families and congregations.

- **Titus 1:10–13** – "For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers... **whose mouths must be stopped**, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain... **Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.**"

6. Deliver Them over to Satan (Excommunication)

In severe cases of blasphemy and unrepentant destruction of the church, the apostles used ultimate church discipline: putting the person completely outside the spiritual protection of the church body.

- **1 Timothy 1:19–20** – "...concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, **whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**"

The New Testament (NKJV) explicitly demonstrates that true, faithful Christians do not abolish or ignore the Law of God. Instead, through the Holy Spirit and the New Covenant, they uphold, establish, and keep it.

Here is how the Scriptures show faithful Christians keeping the Law of God.

1. By the Spirit Writing the Law on Their Hearts

Under the New Covenant, God does not do away with His Law; rather, He changes the *location* of the Law from external stone tablets to the internal minds and hearts of true believers.

- **Hebrews 8:10** – "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: **I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

2. By "Establishing" the Law Through Faith

Paul directly answers the question of whether faith eliminates the Law. He flatly states that genuine faith actually validates and upholds the purpose of the Law.

- **Romans 3:31** – "Do we then make void the law through faith? **Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.**"

3. By Walking According to the Spirit

True Christians are able to fulfill the righteous requirements of God's Law because they no longer live to satisfy their physical, sinful desires, but are guided by the Holy Spirit.

- **Romans 8:3–4** – "...God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, **that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**"

4. By Keeping the Commandments as Proof of Love

The Apostles John and Paul explain that keeping God's commandments is the tangible definition of loving God and loving one's neighbor.

- **1 John 5:3** – "For **this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments**. And His commandments are not burdensome."
- **Romans 13:8–9** – "...for **he who loves another has fulfilled the law**. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

5. As the Direct Prophetic Marker of True Believers

In the book of Revelation, when describing the remnant of true believers who survive Satan's global deception, God specifically identifies them by two distinct traits: their faith of Jesus and their obedience to His Law.

- **Revelation 12:17** – "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, **who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ**."
- **Revelation 14:12** – "Here is the patience of the saints; **here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus**."

*There is a vast difference between simply having faith in Jesus (which even the demons have, according to James 2:19) and possessing the actual **faith of Jesus**—His own faith, mind, and character—living inside a converted, Spirit-led Christian.*

The New Testament (NKJV) explicitly uses this exact phrasing to show that a believer's ability to keep the Law and overcome the world does not come from human willpower, but from Christ actively living His life *through* them.

1. The Faith of Jesus Living in Us

Paul explains that his entire spiritual existence is powered not by his own efforts, but by the very faith of the Son of God operating inside him.

- **Galatians 2:20** – "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

2. Righteousness Through the Faith of Christ

True righteousness and the ability to please God cannot come from human keeping of the Law; it comes strictly through the internal presence of the faith of Christ.

- **Philippians 3:9** – "and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is **through the faith of Christ**, the righteousness which is from God by faith."

- **Galatians 3:22** – "But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by **the faith of Jesus Christ** might be given to those who believe."

3. Justified by the Faith of Jesus

Paul emphasizes that a person is made right with God specifically by the operational faith of Jesus Christ, which anchors the believer's life.

- **Galatians 2:16** – "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by **the faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by **the faith of Christ** and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."
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- **Romans 3:22** – "even the righteousness of God, through **faith of Jesus Christ**, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;"

4. The Prophetic Identity of the Saints

Returning to the verses in Revelation with this corrected understanding, the Greek text and the NKJV clarify that the final remnant doesn't just believe *about* Him — they possess His actual faith.

- **Revelation 14:12** – "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and **the faith of Jesus.**"

This distinction changes everything because it shows that keeping the Law is a *fruit* of Christ living in us, rather than a human tool to earn salvation.

Genuine biblical faith always produces active obedience to God's Law.

The New Testament (NKJV) explicitly rejects the idea that Christians are free to break God's laws. It teaches that while human effort cannot earn salvation, a person who is truly converted *must* keep the Law, including the **Ten Commandments**, as the mandatory fruit of Christ living in them.

Below are the scriptures that prove the ongoing necessity of keeping God's laws.

1. Faith Without Works is Dead (The James Test)

The Apostle James addresses this misunderstanding directly. He states plainly that a professing Christian is **not saved by faith alone**, but must show their faith through obedience to the Law.

- **James 2:24** – "You see then that a man is **justified by works, and not by faith alone.**"
- **James 2:14** – "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? **Can faith save him?**"
- **James 2:17** – "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, **is dead, being alone.**"
- **James 2:20** – "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead?**"

2. The Requirement to Keep the Whole Ten Commandments

James explicitly points to the **Ten Commandments** (the moral law spoken by God) and warns that breaking even one of them makes a person a lawbreaker.

- **James 2:10–11** – "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, **he is guilty of all**. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, **you have become a transgressor of the law.**"

3. Upholding the Second Commandment (No Idols)

The Second Commandment forbids the making of physical idols or images. The New Testament repeatedly commands faithful Christians to strictly keep this law and flee from religious idolatry.

- **1 John 5:21** – "Little children, **keep yourselves from idols**. Amen."
- **1 Corinthians 10:14** – "Therefore, my beloved, **flee from idolatry.**"
- **Galatians 5:19–21** – "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: ... **idolatry**, sorcery ... those who practice such things **will not inherit the kingdom of God.**"
- **Revelation 21:8** – "... murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, **idolaters**, and all liars **shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone...**"

4. Upholding the Fourth Commandment (The Sabbath)

The Fourth Commandment requires keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath holy. The New Testament demonstrates that a restful keeping of the Sabbath remains mandatory for the people of God.

- **Hebrews 4:9** – "There remains therefore a rest [Greek: *Sabbatismos*, meaning a Sabbath-keeping] for the people of God."
- **Luke 23:56** – "Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And **they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.**" (*Note: This was Christ's direct disciples keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath even after His crucifixion*).
- **Matthew 24:20** – "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or **on the Sabbath.**" (*Note: Jesus prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem decades after His death, showing His followers would still be strictly observing the Sabbath*).

5. Jesus Instructs: "If You Want to Enter Life, Keep the Commandments"

When asked directly what must be done to inherit eternal life, Jesus did not tell the man that the Law was going away. Instead, He pointed him straight to the Ten Commandments.

- **Matthew 19:17** – "So He said to him... '**But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.**'"
- **Matthew 5:19** – "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever

does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

6. Defining Sin and the Final Warning

The Bible defines sin strictly as the breaking of God's Law. Anyone who claims to know God but refuses to keep His Ten Commandments is explicitly called a liar by the scriptures.

1 John 3:4 – "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and **sin is lawlessness.**"

1 John 2:4 – "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Revelation 22:14 – "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."