

Almighty God versus Almighty Self

By Gerry Watts

Do you believe that God is Sovereign? Most believers would quickly answer 'Yes, of course,' but how many really do believe that God is absolutely Supreme? This study will attempt to give us the answer to this fundamental question. We will take a close look at one of the key passages in Scripture, Romans 9:10-24, and many others. The resulting conclusion may shock even the most dedicated truth seeker and cause a major shift in your thinking and faith.

The truth of God's sovereignty is the solid rock on which we can stand, especially in these troubled times we live in. It brings a peace that surpasses every frame of mind, and causes us to look to the heights, where we can view the awesome power and love of our Father, who is the Power Supreme, the One and only Creator of the entire universe. Yet due to the frailties of our flesh, we need to become established in, and constantly reminded of, this truth, which reveals the bigger picture and the awesome plan of God for the whole of creation.

Romans 9: 10-24

Paul's letter to the Roman believers is, in itself, a foundational revelation of the evangel (or gospel) proclaimed by Paul. (For further study, see article entitled *The Evangel of God and Its Secrets*). Above all, it teaches Justification by faith, apart from works of law, revealing the full worth and meaning of the correspondent ransom for sin and death, paid by Jesus Christ on the cross, and His resurrection for our justification.

In chapters 9-11, Paul (as a parenthesis) gives us some understanding of God's plan and purpose for Israel and the Nations, especially during this present Administration of Grace. Essentially, chapter 9 looks at Israel's past, chapter 10 looks at the present situation, and chapter 11 takes a look at Israel's future. It also takes into consideration the Nations position in all of this as well. For the purpose of this study, we will only focus on chapter 9, as the rest is looked at in other articles.

The truth am I telling in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifying together with me in holy spirit, that my sorrow is great, and unintermittent pain is in my heart -- for I myself wished to be anathema from Christ -- for my brethren, my relatives according to the flesh, who are Israelites, whose is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the legislation and the divine service and the promises; whose are the fathers, and out of whom is

the Christ according to the flesh, Who is over all, God be blessed for the eons. Amen!

In verses 1-5, Paul reminds us of Israel's unique calling and position among the nations, along with their privileges and blessings. Their greatest honour was giving birth to God's Son, the Messiah, in the flesh. But because of the unbelief and failure of Israel, especially by joining the nations in murdering the Messiah, Paul begins to explain why this was so, and also what God was going to do with them as His earthly people.

Now it is not such as that the word of God has lapsed, for not all those out of Israel, these are Israel; neither that Abraham's seed are all children, but "In Isaac shall your seed be called." That is, that the children of the flesh, not these are the children of God, but the children of the promise is He reckoning for the seed. For the word of the promise is this: At "this season" I shall come "and there will be for Sarah a son." Yet, not only so, but Rebecca also is having her bed of one, Isaac, our father.

So from verse 6, he states that not all Israelites are true Israelites, in their heart, and a genuine Israelite is one descended from Jacob, through Isaac, and not just from Abraham. He then reiterates the original promise made to Abraham about the miraculous birth of Isaac. Paul's point is that those who were circumcised in flesh were only true Israelites if they were circumcised in spirit, in the heart, as well. The true Israel of God is spiritual, and even includes believers of the nations now. The promised son, Isaac, is the type of those who are spiritually born of God (See Jeremiah 4:4; Philippians 3:3-4; Galatians 4:21-31; Romans 2:28-29).

For, not as yet being born, nor putting into practice anything good or bad, that the purpose of God may be remaining as a choice, not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling, it was declared to her that "The greater shall be slaving for the inferior," According as it is written, "Jacob I love, yet Esau I hate."

Now in verses 11-13, he begins to dig deeper by referring to the prophecy made about Jacob and Esau. They both had Isaac as their father, who was the promised son, and yet before either of them had done anything good or bad, in fact before they were even born, God had declared that the elder (Esau) shall serve the younger (Jacob), which gave the firstborn birthright to Jacob. Also, God's affection was to be upon Jacob. The reason for this was

"...that the purpose of God may be remaining as a choice, not out of acts, but of Him who is calling."

It had nothing whatsoever to do with either Jacob or Esau. It was all down to God's choice and purpose!

What, then, shall we be declaring? Not that there is injustice with God? May it not be coming to that! For to Moses He is saying, "I shall be merciful to whomever I may be merciful, and I shall be pitying whomever I may be pitying."

In verse 14, Paul anticipates the question 'Is God unjust?' The answer of course is 'Absolutely not!' He then jumps ahead in time to the account of Moses and his confrontation with Pharaoh. God said to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

Again, this emphasises God's absolute will concerning His mercy and compassion, and His judgment.

Consequently, then, it is not of him who is willing, nor of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful.

Paul then clearly states, in verse 16, that it has nothing to do with any human will or effort, but it relies solely on God's mercy. So let us take a look at Exodus 9, from which Paul quotes.

In the early chapters of Exodus, up to the point about half way through the 10 plagues, it says that **Pharaoh kept hardening his heart** (see Exodus 7:13-14, 22). But it also says in Exodus 9:12 (and also 7:3-4), that **Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart**. Then in verse 16 (Paul's quote), God says,

"For I have raised you up for this very purpose, **that I might display in you my power**, and so that my name should be proclaimed in the entire earth."

So the question we are faced with is, **was it really Pharaoh's choice or not? Was his will really free?** We shall see shortly. Paul sums it up so far by stating that, therefore, 'God has mercy on whom he wills to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wills to harden.'

Now it's at this point that everything within our flesh cries out 'That's not fair!' From our dark, unintelligent hearts, it seems to us that God is very cold hearted and pompous! Paul anticipates this objection by declaring,

'You will be protesting to me, " Why, then, is He still blaming? For who has withstood His intention?" '

The answer speaks loud and clear.

'O man! Who are you to answer back to God? **Shall the clay speak to the potter, "Why did you make me like this?" '**

Paul continues with this theme in verses 21-24, by clearly saying that God, as the potter, has the right to make some vessels for honour and some for dishonour.

Or has not the potter the right over the clay, out of the same kneading to make one vessel, indeed, for honor, yet one for dishonor? Now if God, wanting to display His indignation and to make His powerful doings known, carries, with much patience, **the vessels of indignation, adapted for destruction**, it is that He should also be making known the riches of His glory on **the vessels of mercy**, which He makes ready before for glory -- us, whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but out of the nations also.

The classic example of this is Moses and Pharaoh. God wanted to display His wrath and make His power known, so He is patient with the vessels of wrath (Pharaoh and the Egyptians), which were adapted for destruction. This was so that He could make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy (Moses and the Israelites), which He prepares beforehand for glory. This includes even us (i.e. all true believers in Christ), whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but also out of the nations.

The ultimate conclusion that Paul arrives at in these three parenthetical chapters in Romans, is that, not only Israel's future but the whole future of humanity is decided by God. So what He has promised, He will do.

God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all.

The awesome climax, in Romans 11:36, is that

'...out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be glory for the eons! Amen!'

Will and Intention

For us to be able to see clearly through all of the fog of the various teachings and beliefs on this subject, then we need to distinguish between two important Greek words. They are **Thelema** and **Boulema**.

Thelema is the will, describing the wish or desire. **Boulema** is the intention or plan. God's revealed will can be, and is, opposed by the will of His creatures. But this is only as it accords with His overall intention, that is, His ultimate plan and purpose. In the example above, Pharaoh was thwarting God's will, which was to let the Israelites go. This was on the human level, the domain of the creature, where the human will operates. But on the other hand, everything was in line with God's intention. Pharaoh was only a puppet in God's hands. This is the higher level of the absolute, the deep things of God. There are numerous examples throughout Scripture revealing the will and intention of God. Let us take a look at the most prominent ones.

Joseph

The story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50, is a classic example of God's revealed will being opposed, but it is this very opposition that fulfils His overall plan for all involved. Joseph's prophetic dreams were to be fulfilled one day, in God's perfect time, but the road to fulfillment had many strange twists and turns. It included Joseph's brothers hating and betraying him, and the subsequent injustices that Joseph had to face. Joseph sums it up, as recorded in Genesis 45:4-11 and 50:19-21,

"You meant it for evil, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

This is the key to why all prophecy in Scripture will eventually be fulfilled. No one can resist God's intention. In fact, as far as God is concerned, there is no time line - all is now, the future is already past! (But this is hard for us to grasp at present, so

let us move on!). The story of Joseph is a type of the Messiah's coming, where He was to suffer evil at the hands of His own brothers, but it eventually brings exaltation and reconciliation. As we know, this is fulfilled in the life of Jesus.

Jesus

The life of Jesus the Messiah is the clearest example of God's intention being fulfilled through blatant opposition to His revealed will. Even in Christ's ministry, this is evident. Matthew 11:20-30 is a case in point. Jesus' ministry seemed to be failing in many ways due to the unbelief of the people and their lack of repentance. So Jesus begins denouncing the cities in which most of His miracles had been performed. And yet also at this time, He prays,

"I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."

Jesus operated on both levels, the human will and God's intention. He knew that all that was negative would one day become positive, in accordance with God's overall plan. All evil will be turned into good through the cross of Christ. Yet at the time of His greatest need, on the night before His death, in Gethsemane, He cries,

"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Jesus knew that he had to die. He knew that it was God's will and plan for him, yet in his human frailty and spiritual agony, he asks that, if it be possible, may he take an alternative route. Of course, it wasn't possible. This is the only recorded instance where Christ's will is contrary to His Father's. But he yields to his Father's will. Here is the key that opens the door to the truth about 'free will':

The only true free will is that which is in complete subordination to God's will. Therein lies real freedom.

I heard the following line on an episode from the sci-fi TV series Stargate SG-1, which speaks volumes:

"The whole concept of chain of command undermines the idea of free will."

This is so true. All power and authority originates in God. He is the Supreme One. The first chain of command is Christ Himself, as the visible Image of the invisible God. All power and authority has been given to the Son. He is ultimately the Channel, not the Source. All are under His authority, including Satan, the Adversary. Yet a large portion of the spirit beings among the celestials, as well as the whole of humanity, left to itself, is under the authority of Satan. Even within the celestial realms, there is a further breakdown of authority, with principalities and powers, authorities and lordships. This is also the case amongst humanity, including humanity's authority over the lower creation, that is, the animals, etc.

But God heads up the whole hierarchical structure as the ultimate authority, in the absolute sense. He is operating all in accordance with the counsel of His own

will and His eonian purpose in Christ. (See Ephesians 1:1-12, 15-23; 3:8-13; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 1:9-20).

Now let us return for a minute to the events of Christ's betrayal and death. Judas Iscariot, Jesus' betrayer, had to fulfill this prophetic role. It is also evident that he could not have done so without the direct assistance of Satan, who entered into him (see John 13:27). It also appears as though Jesus actually encouraged Judas to go and fulfill his part, rather than stop him! And even Judas' suicide was also a fulfillment of prophecy (see Acts 1:15-26). So was Judas' will really free? Did he really have any choice?

David

In 2 Samuel 24, we have the story of David's sin of counting the army of Israel. He sinned because he broke God's Law by not collecting the soldier's ransom, for their protection. But it says that Yahweh incited David against them. Yet in 1 Chronicles 21, where this story is repeated, it says that Satan incited David against Israel. Yet it is also clear that David held himself accountable for his actions, and he is disciplined accordingly. Although there appears to be a contradiction here, such is not the case. All are true, in fact, on three distinct levels.

The first is the human sphere, where David sinned against God's revealed (*thelema*) will by not obeying the Law. The second is the celestial sphere, where Satan operates against the *thelema* will of God, and finally, the highest sphere of God's intention (*boulema*). Both Satan and David were used by God to accomplish His purpose, part of which was to purchase the threshing floor of Araunah, which was to become the future site of the Temple.

Much of the details of God's purpose, though, is presently hidden from us, and even what we do see can sometimes seem very unjust and arbitrary. But are we more just than God? He has every right to do exactly as He pleases, being constrained only by His inherent attributes. But this is a test of our faith, and we need to trust in the fact that He is Just and Loving, and even His judgments are ultimately corrective, and therefore beneficial.

Nebuchadnezzar

The story of King Nebuchadnezzar, told in the book of Daniel, is a powerful and wonderful episode in the history of the great Eastern Empires. Nebuchadnezzar was one of the greatest and most powerful kings in ancient history. As ruler of the mighty Babylonian Empire, he truly was a 'head of gold', as portrayed in his dream, which Daniel interpreted through Divine insight and revelation (see Daniel 2). But Nebuchadnezzar was full of pride and arrogance, and gloried in his own 'godhood' by making an image of gold, demanding everyone's worship. He then had to learn an awful lesson in humility and the power of God. In Daniel 4, we can read Nebuchadnezzar's personal account of what occurred. Take note of how he begins his account,

'It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.' (v 2)

Then we are given the details of his dream, as well as Daniel's interpretation and the actual fulfilment of it. Take note of the reason for the dream and its fulfilment,

'...so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.' (v 17)

Then Nebuchadnezzar is driven into the wilds and becomes insane, for what appears to be a period of 7 years. Then his sanity is restored and he acknowledges that God is the supreme Ruler of all. Yet although he had been through a very humbling, painful experience, Nebuchadnezzar concludes his account with the following,

'I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble.' (v 37)

Do you think Nebuchadnezzar had any choice in what happened? No! But he was so blessed when he finally came to know the God who had humbled him that it was all worth it. Without the power of God's Spirit, Nebuchadnezzar would have never changed.

Paul

Then of course there is the transformation of Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul. You can read the events of this story in Acts 9:1-19. Without this miraculous intervention of God, through Christ, Paul would not have become an apostle. He was blinded (figuratively and literally) by his self-righteousness, and had become a murderer and a slanderer. He was the chief of sinners. You can read Paul's own evaluation of himself of before he was a Christian in 1 Timothy 1:12-17. Now do you think Paul had any choice when he was struck off his horse and blinded by the glory of Christ? No!

In Galatians 1:11-17, where Paul is defending and explaining his unique calling and revelations, he states that he had been set apart by God from his mother's womb. In fact, Paul, along with all believers, has been set apart and chosen from before the creation of humanity! Here are some scripture references that reveal this fact: Romans 8:33; Ephesians 1:4-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13. (It is not the purpose of this study to focus on Predestination and Election. These subjects are covered in the article *The New Humanity versus the Old Humanity*).

Paul certainly never taught 'free will,' only of seeking to obey the *thelema* will of God by believing in His grace and seeking to walk by it in the Spirit; that is, to live on the human level of the creature, even as Jesus did, while believing and resting in the *boulema* plan of God.

Job

At the very beginning of the account of Job's life, we are given an important glimpse into the celestial realm. Twice we become spectators of a conversation between Satan and Yahweh, in the presence of numerous celestial messengers (commonly rendered 'angels' or 'sons of God'). See Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-10. Satan

wants to torment Job and cause him to curse God. So Yahweh uses this opportunity to fulfill His intention, which is to teach Job, and also mankind through Job's account, the place of evil in creation. It was also to demonstrate the power of faith and endurance, which God gave to Job during his trials. And eventually, the latter part of Job's life was better than the former.

The lesson: **God brought good out of the evil, and the evil didn't occur because Job had done anything specifically bad or sinful.**

Now take note of two very important things here. Firstly, Satan needed permission to do what he did to Job, and he was not allowed to take Job's life. Secondly, when Job's wife tells him to curse God, he replies,

"Shall we accept good from God, and not evil?" (2:10).

Then it says that in all this, Job did not sin in what he said. Job attributed evil to God, and did not sin by doing so. At this point, it is important that we distinguish between **sin** and **evil**. In Scripture, **sin** means 'missing the mark,' that is, a mistake. **Evil** means 'a calamity,' which generally brings pain of some kind or another. God never sins, but He does bring evil and He uses it as an essential part of His plan. This will eventually teach us to appreciate the good, and will bring untold blessings that will have no end (this subject is also covered in other articles).

Isaiah 45 is a classic passage on God's sovereignty, which Paul is clearly alluding to in Romans 9. Isaiah 45:7 says,

'I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create evil; I, Yahweh, do all these things.'

Also,

'Yahweh has made everything for its own pertinent end, yea even the wicked for the day of evil.'

(Proverbs 16:4)

'When evil comes to a city, has not Yahweh caused it?'

(Amos 3:6b)

'Whether it is good or evil, we will obey Yahweh our God.'

(Jeremiah 42:6)

Evil from the hands of God is never wrong. Evil from the hands of men is generally always wrong.

Michaiah

We have a similar instance to the one in Job in 2 Chronicles 18. While Michaiah is prophesying to the kings of Israel and Judah, he recounts how he saw the throne room of heaven, with all the celestial beings present before Yahweh. It then

appears as though Yahweh asks for a volunteer, to go and lure Ahab to his death. A spirit agrees to do so by causing the false prophets to lie. Yahweh then sends the spirit on its way. Michaiah then concludes his account by saying,

'So now Yahweh has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours. Yahweh has decreed disaster (*evil*) for you.' (v 22)

It was God's intention that Ahab was to die for his wickedness and arrogance, and that the false prophets were to be exposed, so Yahweh is seen as being the source of the lying spirit and the evil. The bottom line is that God is in absolute control of all things, including the celestial beings. This remains true today, even though God is not ruling the earth through a physical nation like He was in the past, as Israel's King. But Man's Day is coming to a close, and then the Lord's Day will arrive, which will blow away all doubts as to who is really in control.

Adam and Eve

Now we come to the crux of the matter. How we view this episode in history will determine our understanding of God and His plan for creation, especially as it relates to the death of Christ on the cross. The question is, 'Who is responsible for sin and death entering humanity, and further still, the whole of creation?' Is the answer Adam, Satan or God? Let us take a look.

In God's Law, it states that if a man digs a pit and leaves it uncovered, and an animal then falls into it and dies, he is held responsible for the accident and he must make restitution. The dead animal then becomes his (see Exodus 21:33-34). There are other liability laws which are similar to this (see Exodus 21: 28-31; 22:5; Deuteronomy 22:8). As Creator of the earth and humanity, God is the Owner and is therefore responsible for it. The Genesis account tells us that God placed Adam and Eve, who were capable of sinning, in Eden, and gave them a simple test of obedience involving two trees. He then placed, or as some would have it, allowed, Satan to seduce Eve. All of this was clearly foreknown by God. He knew Adam would sin, by siding with Eve, which, in accordance with the given penalty, brought death and further sin to the whole race (literal Hebrew 'to die shall you be dying' - Genesis 2:17).

In effect, God dug the pit, left it uncovered and His creature fell in and died. So He had to make restitution by paying the price and claiming His creature, which He did via Christ's death. God makes no apology for setting this up and holding Himself ultimately responsible for humanity's sin and death. As Paul says in Romans 8:20-21,

'For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in expectation that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.'

It was God's intention that sin and death should enter His creation. To many, this sounds like blasphemy. But think about it. Without sin and death, there would be no reason for a Saviour. Therefore God's love, grace and justice could never be fully revealed. The depths of His heart would have remained hidden to all. Without the opposites in creation, we can never really know or appreciate what we have or

don't have. Adam and Eve would not have appreciated the blessings that they had in Eden. They had nothing to compare it with (that is, all experience is relative). They had the knowledge of good, but they needed the knowledge of evil to be able to truly appreciate the good. Without death, we cannot truly understand and appreciate life. The same can be said for right and wrong, justice and injustice, light and darkness, health and sickness, truth and error, etc, etc. We cannot have one without the other. Nature is full of such examples.

But this is in no way suggesting that sin and all the vile wickedness, and human (or rather inhuman) evil that is committed during the ages, is acceptable to God. Absolutely not! Neither is it implying that God is distant or indifferent to the agony and frustration that are the sad result of sin in its many forms. When tragedy strikes, especially through sickening, violent and perverted acts of senseless evil, it is natural and right to feel anger, along with a shout for justice. God feels our pain. He walks with us. And all wrongs will be put right in God's time, not ours. It is good to be objective about things, but that doesn't stop us being subjective in our experiences. That is what it is to be human, to be able to feel pain and pleasure, sorrow and joy. It is also very natural to want to protect our loved ones at all costs rather than have a fatalistic, stoic attitude that seems to be indifferent to injustice and pain.

But we must not forget the love and grace of God, as portrayed by Christ on the cross. This is where the power is, not in anger and vengeance. Yet every attribute of God, including His wrath and jealous anger, needs to be fully revealed during the ages, so that we may know Him more fully, and also know ourselves more fully. Every aspect has its place in the overall plan.

Also, in emphasising the true nature of the grace of God, it can (and should, if taught correctly) give the impression that we can do exactly as we like. "What," you say! Paul anticipates this in Romans 6,

'What, then, shall we declare? That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing?' (v 1)

'What then? Should we be sinning, seeing that we are not under law, but under grace?' (v 15)

The answer Paul gives to both of these is a resounding, "May it not be coming to that!" or simply, "No!" He then explains that to truly understand God's grace we must understand the bondage of sin within our own hearts, and then we will not want to sin, in any form. But of course we do sin, due to our mortality. But grace is certainly not an excuse to sin. In fact, **it is only grace that prevents us from sinning!** We are all slaves to sin and death. What we all need is to be slaves of righteousness by grace, which leads to life.

We also need to remember, when judging others for their sin, that many hardened criminals have been changed by God's Spirit. Their realisations of their crimes and the resultant pain they have caused their victims have caused them deep grief and repentance. In the same way, every one will eventually have their eyes opened and their heart softened by God's Spirit, to see the awful consequences of sin. There will be severe judgment and condemnation for many, before the consummation of

God's purpose, but the ending is a happy one! We really will live happily ever after! Now let us return to Eden.

Eve and Adam were still held accountable for their actions, as was Satan, and even the serpent, which Satan had used as a channel. All of them received God's righteous judgment, and through them, sin and death has been passed on to all humanity, affecting the whole earth. As Paul says in Romans 5:12-13,

'Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned.'

We all sin because we are mortal, that is, we are slowly dying. All the suffering and woes on the earth are due to Adam's initial sin. This in turn creates a huge tension in creation, which cries out to be set straight. God holds Himself ultimately responsible and He will set things straight in His own perfect time.

So is it fair that humanity will be held accountable to God for thoughts and actions that couldn't really be resisted? This applies particularly to unbelievers who are not chosen for eonian life? And what about the likes of Adam, Cain, Pharaoh, Judas, Pontius Pilate, etc, etc? Well, for the answer to this, let me take you back to Romans 9:19-20,

'You will be protesting to me, then, "Why, then, is He still blaming? For who has withstood His intention?" O man! Who are you, to be sure, who are answering again to God?'

God will be justified in His actions by bringing untold blessing to all of His creation at the consummation of the Eons (or Ages). But what about Satan?

Satan, the Adversary

As the principal ruler of the kingdom of darkness in the celestials, Satan is the archenemy of God. He always operates against the *thelema* will of God. But as we have already seen, he cannot go against God's *boulema* plan or intention. The bottom line is that God controls Satan. As all believers would agree, God created the Adversary. But why? Simply stated, without an enemy God could not reveal His power. This is clearly seen in the passage we have been studying. Pharaoh was only a pawn in the Adversary's hand. Yet the Adversary was only a puppet in God's hands! This leads to the inevitable question, Does Satan have a 'free will?' And was he created in innocence?

The common passages in Scripture which are used to support the idea that Satan 'fell' are very vague. (See Ezekiel 28:11-19, and Isaiah 14:9-15). There is clearly a future fall mentioned in Revelation 12:7-9. But whether there was a primeval fall is debatable. What we do know, though, is that the Slanderer has been sinning **from the beginning**; he was a murderer **from the beginning**, a liar and the father of lies. Deception is his native tongue (see John 8:44 and 1 John 3:8). Christ came to destroy the works of the Adversary, which is sin and death, but without an adversary there would have been no reason to come at all! And one day Christ will fully accomplish His mission of eradicating sin and death forever.

Whether Satan fell or not is beside the point, because like Adam, he was created for a purpose. That purpose was that, in accordance with God's plan, he should be the Adversary of God. So even Satan's will is not really 'free' nor are the numerous celestial beings who follow him. There is only one free will - God's.

In concluding, the following scenario is what most Christians are generally taught to believe:

God created a perfect universe with perfect creatures, but for reasons outside His control, this original plan A failed. The majority of His creation is ruined, and even plan B, trying to save His creation, is also destined to fail! God is bound by the wills of those He created! So He has to condemn the majority of His creatures to an eternal place of torment or annihilation, from which there is no return. Satan becomes more victorious than Christ, and God Himself limps out with only a handful of His creation!

If this were really true, what a sad state of affairs. What a diabolical, sickening end to a very sad story! Some 'good news' this is! But thank God this is not the truth!

So what is the truth? What is the destiny of all God's creatures then? If no one is resisting God's intention, and therefore no one is really free to make their own choice, absolutely speaking, then surely God would be unjust if He was to condemn the majority of His creatures to an eternal hell of some kind or another! That's exactly right! This brings us to the heart of the matter. **The inevitable conclusion is that God cannot do this, and remain loving and just at the same time. Here are some extremely important reasons why God will eventually save all.**

- Firstly, **God cannot sin**, that is, make a mistake. So if there is even the thought of a plan B, then the original plan A, the overall intention, has failed. Hence God would be a sinner!
- Secondly, **God is love**. 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 describes the true love of God. It states that love never gives up. It always endures. Hence God cannot truly rest until all of His creatures are saved and reconciled to Him. Otherwise, He ceases to be God, because He stops loving!
- Also, **God wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realisation of the truth** (see 1 Timothy 2:4). Is man's will stronger than God's? No! Therefore God's will shall be realised so that everyone will be saved and come into a realisation of the truth. It's just that this will not happen to everyone all at once.

- Colossians 1:18-20 states that through Christ, as mediator of God and man, and His sacrificial death on the cross, **God will reconcile to Himself all those who are His enemies, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens.** This will require absolute peace throughout the whole universe from every creature. In the context, this applies to every intelligent creature that has ever existed. This is Universal Reconciliation.
- Also, **God is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers** (*especially* not solely). See 1 Timothy 4:9-11. Believers (the chosen ones) will have a special place in God's unfolding plan of the ages, and we will experience eonian life and will be saved first. But ultimately, God must save all mankind, otherwise He is not the Saviour of all mankind! This applies to every human, including all those who have died!
- Therefore, **death must be abolished.** The state of death, as the penalty for Adam's sin, must no longer exist. (See 1 Corinthians 15:20-28). The only way to abolish death is to give everyone life! The Lake of Fire, mentioned in Revelation, is the Second Death. Even though there are differing views on what death is, the fact remains that all death will eventually be concentrated in the Lake of Fire. (See Revelation 20:13-15). The Second Death is only eonian, that is, it remains until the consummation of the ages. After that, death will be abolished! Death is the last enemy to be conquered.

(As you may have noticed if you have carefully read Revelation 20, verse 10 seems to state that the Lake of Fire lasts 'for ever and ever.' This actually says in the Greek, 'for the eons of the eons' which is referring to the final two ages or eons of time. For the correct translation of eon, eonian, and related phrases, see *The Concordant Version*. See also *Is There Really A Hell?* for further study on Hell and the Lake of Fire).

- **God must ultimately become all in all.** (See 1 Corinthians 15:28). He is the meaning and purpose of life. To know God as Father and His Son as Lord and Brother is what we are here for. He is **LIFE**. He is **LOVE**. This is the goal of the universe, that through Christ, God will become everything to everyone. Even Christ Himself shall become subjected to God, so that God may be **ALL** in **ALL**. God's purpose of the ages shall be complete. Sin and death shall be eradicated from the universe.
- **Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall acclaim,** throughout God's creation, that Jesus the Messiah is Lord, for the glory of God the Father. This does not indicate coercion but willing worship. (See Philippians 2:9-11).

A common objection to this belief is that this teaching promotes a fatalistic attitude. 'Why bother living a Christian life, if all are going to be saved anyway? What is the point in doing anything?' These objections only reveal the lack of understanding of why humanity was created. **The purpose of life is to know God and His Son, our Lord, Christ Jesus;** to know them through every experience in life; to know them in every aspect of life. They are **LIFE** itself. This is why we were made - in fact why everything was made. (See Colossians 1:9-20, 1 Corinthians 8:5-7).

If you still think it's fatalistic, just consider Jesus Christ and see how He lived. And He knew that he had come to die the death of the cross!

So do you really believe in one Almighty God? Or do you believe in the almighty self? **The former is truth; the latter is a delusion!** Things are the way they are, and we can either believe God or believe a lie. Ultimately, only God can, and will, change things to bring about a happy ending.

There are numerous passages that can be found that may *seem* to contradict the above, but I can assure you that these passages will only contradict if the following is not observed:

To have a pattern of sound words; that is, accurate, consistent translation. (2 Timothy 1:13)

To correctly cut the word of truth; that is, to recognise the various Ages and Administrations within God's Plan; to consider the context and overall plan revealed through prophecy. (2 Timothy 2:2,15)

Keep this one thing in mind when considering what you *really* believe. Does it glorify God or does it glorify self? Does it glorify the Creator or the creature? If you are having problems believing in the Almighty God, then you're having problems in exalting the almighty self, however veiled it might be. I know because I've experienced it!

May we all come to know the evangel of the **glory** of the **happy** God! (See 1 Timothy 1:5-11)

Now to the King of the eons, the incorruptible, invisible, only, and wise God, be honour and glory for the eons of the eons! Amen!

(1 Timothy 1:17)

'O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! ...seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!'

(Romans 11:33-36).

Bibles used in this study: Concordant Version and the New International Version