

A Little Theory on God,
The World,
and
Everything Else in Between.
(The Logic of God)

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“What do you do in your free time?”

“I go behind my bed, in an empty space that is there, I close myself in with my bed curtain and I think.”

“What do you think about?”

“I think about God, about life, about ETERNITY... I think.”ⁱ

(St. Therese of Lisieux – A Biography)

Part One

The Human Being

The word "human" comes from the Latin word "humanus," which is thought to be a combination of homo, meaning "man", and humus, meaning "earth". The word "human" itself was first recorded in the mid-13th century. It is a loanword from Middle English, which comes from the Old French word "humain," which means "of or belonging to man" as opposed to deity or otherworldly.ⁱⁱ

There isn't more need be said about this since I am positively positive whoever is reading this is a human being and as such, you very well know what or who a human being is, in the sense that you too are a human being and as such you have an inkling on the subject. Basing on that very reason – that we all have an idea on who or what a human is - whatever next I am going to outline is my understanding of the term. Due to the complexity of the subject permit me the oversimplification I am about to do; especially in defining the different ways we have defined ourselves as a species.

I have always been fascinated by our complexity; more so, by how everyone seems to have an opinion on who or what we are; and every answer sometimes disagreeing with every other. This was for me the clearest signal of our innate complexity; because, if we were an inherently simplistic specie, we would not have required so much theorizing on what or who we are.

A scientist's answer – although not all scientists believe this - can be boiled down to evolution – that is, we evolved from something, usually from a single-celled organism to a multi-celled organism, to a vertebrate, to a land-living vertebrate, to a mammal – that is what we are in case you didn't know; I am mammal, you are a mammal, everyone is a mammal. This is backed up by very serious study, evidence and hypothesis.

On the other hand, a believer's answer – that is a believer in God or a God - is more along the lines of we are a created being – that is, we were crafted and fashioned by an intelligent being into who we are today. The key point being that nothing about us is by chance; everything is by design. We were created either as a fully grown human as in Adam and Eve – our arch-parents in the Judo-Christian and Islamic belief systems - or we were created as a cell but destined to be who we have become. This too is backed up by a long tradition of study.

And then we have a multitude of other theories that we can say exist in between these two, borrowing from either the first or the second; but not agreeing completely with either, like panspermia – where we either arrive here accidentally on an asteroid and then evolve into who we are or we are created by aliens – who in this case are like our gods - to most likely be studied by them, and so on and so forth.

This goes to show how inherently complex we are. I beg to humbly add my voice to the above even though I am not an authority in those fields. I will outline my thoughts on the subject and why I think as I do on the same, hopefully adding a new perspective to our understanding on humanity's place in the universe.

And so, to begin, I thought I should start with the most obvious thing that we all agree on, more or less, and that is, we are human beings and as mentioned above that means we are of the earth which means we are physical beings – that is to say, we have bodies. Bodies that have weight and occupy space; made up of things we have called atoms, which are in turn made up of things called electrons, neutrons and protons, collectively called particles.

The only difference between our body and other physical things is that our bodies are living – that is, they have all the characteristics of living things; for instance, all living things detect changes in their environment and respond to them; all living things grow and develop; all living things are capable of reproduction, the process by which living things give rise to offspring; all living things are able to maintain a constant internal environment through homeostasis.ⁱⁱⁱ These are the core characteristics of living things, and we possess all of them; so, I believe we are living beings, not stones or worse zombies.

This next part is going to explore the basics of what we know of human beings; the first part is about the human body and it will explore the similarity between the body and a machine. This is aimed at drawing a conclusion that like all machines, our body needs software, that is, the soul to work; and lastly a power source, the spirit to actually turn on.

The Human Body

The human body is the most complex machine we know, and that is saying something, considering some of the things in nature; also, not surprising seeing as we are studying ourselves, we would be complex. Our body is capable of miraculous things, no wonder up to now we are still blown away when scientists discover some new information about our bodies. I would encourage you to read up on some of the new discoveries or even the old ones in case you are not in the medical field.

For our part, let us delve a little bit into what we know of the human body. The human body is composed of a vast number of cells, estimated to be around 30 to 40 trillion cells. However, estimates may vary slightly depending on the source and methodology used for counting cells.^{iv}

These cells bunch together into specialized units, we call organs, like the heart, the liver, the lungs and so on to do a specific task. To be more exact these organs are made up of different units of specialized cells called tissue; but by and large, put simply, cells in our body specialize to form organs; which in turn work together to form systems; like the circulatory system which is made up of the heart – as already mentioned above – working with the blood vessels. While the number of systems may vary slightly depending on the classification used, a commonly accepted number is eleven (11) major systems.^v And these systems working together make up your physical body. Like I said, our body is a very complex machine.

Our body is a machine in the very same sense that we understand machines. For example, a phone is a machine, and it too is made up of different systems, which when broken down form something akin to organs, which when broken down form something akin to cells. Let me give this a go: “The human body and an android phone share striking similarities when considering their hardware components. Just as a human body is composed of cells, an android phone is built from microchips, each serving as a fundamental unit. These microchips, akin to cells, collaborate to form circuits, analogous to tissues, which further assemble into essential components like the processor, RAM, and storage, much like organs in the human body. In essence, both the human body and an android phone exhibit a hierarchical organization, where cells form tissues, tissues form organs, organs constitute systems, and collectively, they culminate in a functional entity.”^{vi}

Our understanding of human medicine hinges upon the foundational concept that the human body is intelligently organized and can be systematically studied. It is founded on the belief that there exists a coherent relationship among its various components, allowing for a wholesome comprehension of the individual causal connections within.

And therefore, just like how in machines the breakdown of one part can cause the phone to stop working; in the same way, a damage of one part of the body can cause the entire body to breakdown. Case in point, hypertension or high blood pressure is brought about by a problem in how the heart and the blood vessels are working; this in turn can cause problems in the kidneys – the urinary system; the eyes and, or the brain – the nervous system; and so on and so forth. And proper treatment has to take into account all these other systems, sometimes up to the very cells that make them up.

All the above goes to show how machine like our body really is; matter of fact, reactions in our bodies can even be mathematically calculated; such that, even before you take a tablet, a doctor will already know which organ it will affect the most; which organ it won't affect at all; how long it will be in the body; which percentage of that drug will reach the blood stream and for how long; how will it be expelled from the body and after how many hours or days and so on. All this is studied in disciplines like pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics.

Now all this does not mean that our science is able to predict everything one hundred percent; but the percentage is high enough that human medicine is possible.

I hope all the above is convincing enough to show eerily similar our bodies are to machines. To deepen this, let us look at it from another angle.

All machines, especially the sophisticated ones like a phone, a computer and so on have two major divisions: software and hardware. The hardware is what we have been looking at. It refers to all the parts of a phone that, to put it simply, you can touch; as in, the parts that are physical. For most of us, these are the only parts of a phone that we know and can easily understand. For example, when a phone screen is broken, you can see it. You can then take it to the mechanic and have it replaced. That's like having an eye problem and you go for surgery and it's repaired.

The hardware both for a phone and a human body are easy to understand, because they are physical, most of the time. A kidney that needs replacement is pretty easy to explain; "I have a kidney problem, and I need a new kidney." Just like a phone camera's replacement is quiet easy to explain. It is not so easy to replace these things; that's why we have professionals who study many years to be able to do it properly; but, it is easy enough to understand.

However, there is the other element of all machines, the software; the stuff that makes it all work together; the barely understood stuff that we sort of know, but barely

understand. In human terms we call this stuff, the human mind/soul. The part that we most relate to as us; no wonder for many centuries we have believed that 'we' are trapped in our bodies. But who is this we that is trapped?

The Human Soul (Mind) / The Human Software

It is abundantly obvious to all of us that we are not our bodies. Matter of fact a more accurate definition would be, we seem more like observers watching our life unfold with a mixture of curiosity, excitement or dread at what will happen next and sometimes with detachment as if we already know it is not going to be pretty, but we are going through with it anyway.

So, there is me, the observer, who also happens to control this complex machine we call our body. This is why when someone loses a limb in an accident, we do not say, "so and so has reduced, he/she was a full man or woman; but now, they are half or three-quarters".

The reason is nothing of the observer has been touched, but the efficiency of their body has been. So more often than not, they may get frustrated with their body's poor efficiency. And this too happens to all of us as we age. You still feel capable of things, but your body sort of lets you down. In other words, the point I am driving is that we are aware of this distinction between us – the you who is aware – and our bodies – the house/habitant/prison of the observer.

Now, who is this you, this observer, who makes decisions, who loves coffee or tea, who has a sweet tooth, and how are you different from your body that gets satisfied after three slices of pizza even though *you* need more; that gets tired, even though *you* want to continue working; that gets sleepy in class even though *you* really really want to be awake, so that *you* do not lose points by falling off the chair. The list goes on and on, of the many times we want something, and our bodies – which in this instance are like a machine we inhabit – go contrary too. Do not get me started on weight gain!

The first thing we notice is there is an important difference between these two entities; as already mentioned above, the body's mechanisms can be understood and explained to a certain degree of accuracy. There are valid reasons why, you would fall asleep in class even though you do not want to; or get satisfied quickly; or gain or lose weight when you do not want to. There are scientific explanations for these. Case in point, most of us dozed off in class after lunch, because we ate cornbread (Ugali) for lunch which is a very heavy meal, and apparently the brain prioritized digestion over education.

But the second entity, the you who seems to be an observer is not so easy to understand. Psychology which stems from the Greek words "psyche," meaning "soul" or "mind," and "logia," which translates to "study" or "knowledge"; is the study or knowledge of the soul or mind. Has made enormous strides, but we are still more often than not baffled by why we are the way we are. Why we love what we love, or hate what we hate, and sometimes love what we hate.

The mind as it is termed in more scientific communities; or soul, as it is referred to in more religious circles, is an enigma.

The mind/ soul is the observer, the you that actually perceives things, thinks things, plans things, feels things and ultimately commands the body to do things; like you just told yourself to turn the page seems to be just an observer. It is for this reason that I refer to the soul/mind as the software of the body; since, just like how computers have a harder outer-shell that can relate to our bodies in its mechanical function; they also have software that relates to our mind/soul that animates the mechanical body. To continue the analogy, software has to be regularly updated; a bit like how we have to also be updated – that is through learning and unlearning things.

There is simply so much literature about the soul/mind to adequately summarize it here; owing of course to how enigmatic it is. But to dwell on what we observe about ourselves and our consciousness: we seem to have three major faculties; that is, the things we seem to be. And these are:

Rational (Intellect) – this refers to the use of our reasoning. We often reason things out. Using questions such as, why did that happen? How did it happen? And so on. Often we would like to believe that it is possible to do this without being influenced by the next faculty – emotions. But it is rarely so. Very few people can truly be impartial when reasoning, and we call them psychopaths. But as a faculty it has been developed so much by science and its use of logic; which really refers to reasoning in a step by step manner; each step building on the one before. When we are in this state – reasoning; using our rational faculty – we are influenced by facts and knowledge that we have accumulated; collectively called experience. There can be no reasoning if there is no knowledge on which the statements in the act of reasoning are built on.

For example, if you have never studied medicine, when you find doctors discussing and reasoning out a case; you keep quiet; because to you, they are speaking another language all together. You do not share the same knowledge base in order to reason with them properly.

Emotional (Feelings) – this encompasses our feelings: sad; angry; heartbroken; dissatisfied; anxious; enthusiastic and so on. Sometimes there is a reason for feeling what you are feeling and sometimes there isn't. You just do. This faculty also includes desire: what I want, usually based on what you are feeling. That's why our desires are sometimes so flighty. One minute you want one thing and the next you want something else. As we grow up, we learn to disregard some of the things we feel we want; because, we know it will soon pass. Case in point, you are in a taxi, and you feel like being hugged. Usually you do not jump on your neighbor. Instead, you look out the window and maybe you see a big fat cow and suddenly your mind is racing on what makes cows fat, the hug long forgotten. But some desires are not so flighty, and these keep coming back more and more and require serious attention. It is these desires that end up dictating what our life is going to be. For example, you have a strong desire to help people, this will prompt you to seek out how exactly you can do this, using your reason. And a decision is usually made when both the emotional and rational faculty are in agreement.

This of course does not mean that such a decision is a perfect decision, since, as I mentioned above, the rational is influenced by knowledge, which comes from outside you. So you can desire something, and reason out that it is the right thing for you. But if you didn't collect enough information beforehand, or worse, collected the wrong information then it may likely be a wrong decision/choice. We call this capacity freewill.

Will (Freewill) – this refers to our capacity to choose between two or more options. This is the defining characteristic of a human being: our ability to decide/make a judgment call. As you may have already surmised, our decisions are influenced majorly by the two faculties above. On a daily basis we make hundreds of decisions, for example, whether to continue reading or close the book? You may be feeling tired, or you have an errand to run, or maybe turn in and sleep. But there is also a desire to finish this part, so you start with something new next time. You may hold off the decision until you turn a page and maybe find there is no end in sight and thereby you decide to stop. Or maybe you find the chapter is ending on the next page and you persevere to that. My point is, we are constantly making such decisions all day long, sometimes consciously, like what to eat; and sometimes, barely giving it a thought, like turning a page. Not noticing that you have just made a decision to continue reading rather than stop.

This faculty, as already mentioned is the defining characteristic of a human being. Sometimes the choices people make, make sense to us. Sometimes they leave us baffled, wondering whether that person is human at all. Because you would like to believe you have the same desires and emotion and that you have more or less the same knowledge base that is constant in all humans. But then they make a decision and you wonder, how

they could have come to such a decision. I am sure I am not the only one still baffled by those early Christian martyrs, who chose to be eaten by lions rather than renounce the name of Christ. Or the Uganda Martyrs who chose to be burnt alive rather than publicly deny Jesus. Some people call it madness, that they were driven by their emotions. I rather believe that they made conscious decisions founded on a knowledge base different from my own; their experience of Jesus was vastly different from my own, no wonder they made choices that do not make sense to me.

I have explained each of these aspects of ourselves independently but they never work like that. They are so intertwined that it is nigh impossible sometimes to even tell them apart. We can switch from one to another at light speed that we are never even fully conscious of it. Our tendency to change our mind is actually due to this; our mind whizzing at lightning speed from one thing to another. This sometimes culminates in a mind/soul in turmoil where you literally feel divided between two things, each fully backed up by its own emotions and reasoning, making choice all but impossible, and when there is no choice, there is no action.

Action is the culmination of all that we have seen so far. My desire and reason coming together, leading to a choice, and then my body stepping up to fulfill whatever it is I have decided to do.

I seem to be a symphony of these four aspects of my life. Either I am using my rational faculty, reasoning, planning, forecasting, remembering, memorizing, et cetera; or I am using my emotional: desiring, wanting, craving, feeling, et cetera; or I am deciding, making a choice, and or implementing one. At any one moment one or all of these things are happening and that is my being alive.

Matter of fact, I hazard a definition that I am these operations. As long as these operations are running then I am; borrowing heavily from Rene Descartes, "I think therefore I am." As long as I am thinking, then I am; as long as I am desiring, feeling, wanting, planning, remembering, choosing, deciding then I am; as long as I am acting then I am. I am these processes. Even when asleep, we now know, that the mind is working, our subconscious mind never sleeps. We are working, processing things, be-ing.

So, we have a body – a complex piece of machinery that works with an efficiency level that has never been replicated. We have a soul/mind that runs in the body or runs the body, processing things, be-ing. And this is how we be, until, something happens and the processes stop running. We call this death.

At that moment, you stop be-ing. The body stops working; instead, it starts breaking down into component parts.

What prompts this death, we do not know. But the one thing we are certain of is that it happens despite ourselves. There is nothing I can do to forestall it. I know it is coming. I can leave the healthiest lifestyle, but I know it is still coming. That means regardless of the life I live, I am going to die. There is not a single thing I can do about it. All I can do is live in such a way that I hope my body holds out long enough for me to reach an old age.

That is the only clue we have on death. It manifests through the breakdown of the body, not the soul. This is why every story or theory of fountain of youth is about keeping the body working in peak form. We believe that as long as the body is working in peak form, we shall never die. The first problem with keeping the body in peak form is aging. We believe if we can stop our bodies from aging then we shall never die. That of course is a huge mountain to climb, but our scientists are working tirelessly towards understanding why we age.

But I believe, the real question is, what is it that keeps the body alive in the first place? Because when you think about it, aging means the body is no longer efficient. It is receiving the same amount of things it has been receiving since, but it is no longer using them efficiently. Death on the other hand is an end, the body has stopped working. Aging may lead to death, but it is definitely not the cause of death. If it were, we should be able to predict at what age death sets in; but so far, it comes for us at any age. The same disease can kill one person and another survives.

It seems to me that there is something more that keeps us a live; a sort of spark, for lack of a better word that once it is out, we are dead. I can hazard that the same spark initiates the beginning of our life, and it is when this spark goes out that we are clinically dead. And once it goes out, there is nothing we can do to start it up again.

To better understand this, let us go back to the beginning.

The Beginning of a Human Life

Science tells us that all living things are made up of cells; human beings are made up of cells containing 46 chromosomes. This is our DNA - our unique blue print different from all the other species on earth:

Human (*Homo sapiens*): 46 chromosomes (23 pairs)

House mouse (*Mus musculus*): 40 chromosomes (20 pairs)
Fruit fly (*Drosophila melanogaster*): 8 chromosomes (4 pairs)
Garden pea (*Pisum sativum*): 14 chromosomes (7 pairs)
Domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*): 78 chromosomes (39 pairs)
Domestic cat (*Felis catus*): 38 chromosomes (19 pairs)
Rice (*Oryza sativa*): 24 chromosomes (12 pairs)
Common wheat (*Triticum aestivum*): 42 chromosomes (21 pairs)
Honeybee (*Apis mellifera*): 32 chromosomes (16 pairs)
Carrot (*Daucus carota*): 18 chromosomes (9 pairs)

In essence, every living thing has DNA, and it is how we scientifically tell each other apart.

At our conception, I mean at the conception of every human being. Two cells are needed: a sperm and an ovum; each carrying 23 chromosomes, the exact half of what a full human being needs. When a sperm meets a mature ovum, fertilization takes place and those 23 chromosomes from each of our parents come together as randomly as nature could make it, to make one new unique cell of 46 chromosomes. This cell for all intent and purpose is you, for the simple reason that, from that moment on, this cell is, for lack of a better word, life-carrying; and left to itself, in 9 months, a human being will be born.

Let me explain the uniqueness of this situation, every cell in our body survives as long as it is in some way attached to us. This is true for everything living thing; a branch on a tree is living as long as it is attached to the tree, so are the leaves, and the fruits and so on. Once it is cut off from the tree, it immediately begins to die, that is, it stops its life sustaining actions and starts disintegrating. This is why when blood is drawn from us, it is stored in an environment that slows down this disintegration. In the same way we store fruits and other supplies from other living things. The point is, as long as they are not attached in some way to the host, they start dying. The host is the organism that is carrying the life sustaining spark.

And sometimes when the part is re-attached, it starts living again, the disintegration is halted and reversed, like we see in transplants both in animals and in plants.

Now this is also true for our sperm and ovum. Neither the ovum nor the sperm can last if they do not meet. The ovum lasts only 24 hours maximum and the sperm is known to last up to 7 days maximum. If fertilization does not take place, then they both die as everything else in nature does. In other words, none of them in themselves carries the

spark of life, the potential to be self-sustaining. Because if they did, then at the very least each would stay alive as long as the man or woman who provided them is alive.

So both these cells are carrying 23 chromosomes and their batteries that are running out. They are dying. However when they meet, suddenly something impossible happens, together these two cells combine and are able to ignite a something that causes them to start a new life. This is mind boggling to say the least, because it does not make sense. At any other time in nature, when you put two dying things together, they die faster; get two apples and infuse them together and see what happens, they will just rot faster, two limbs – the same, two tree branches – the same. Even if they didn't die faster, they would not start again. Let alone build a whole new organism.

This happens only in this circumstance, at the beginning of a new life – both in animals and in plants. And my belief is, it's because at that very moment something new is added; something not physical as in having atoms and all that, because we have not been able to discover it, but capable of enlivening the physical, this is the spark of life. It is what jumpstarts those two cells as they bond to: instead of forming another dying organism, to instead start the life sustaining activity of cell division that we see in the organism throughout its life until it dies, then cell division stops and cell disintegration starts; because whatever had been powering that self-sustaining activity has stopped, and then the organism starts disintegrating to its fundamental particles.

This spark of life is not a physical force, or else we would have found it in our bodies already; and then probably been able to replicate it. I guess like how electricity is really not like the hardware of a computer or like its software, but capable of running it. This life spark runs the human body, allowing the mind/soul to develop over the years to the human being you and I are.

It is this life spark I am calling the human spirit.

The Human Spirit

One thing seems very clear to me, the human spirit is not of human origin; because if it were, then we would be able to control it. By human origin I mean in the same state as we are in – the physical. As already mentioned, we have developed many ways of working on things that we share the same plane of existence with.

For example, the breakdown of the human body due to disease has led to the development of human medicine – with all its wonders today, and we are looking forward

with hope to the wonders to come, case in point, genetic engineering where our very body can be engineered to look and work a certain way.

We have made great strides in the study of the human mind/soul. The field of psychology is advancing at breakneck speeds to.

The one place we seem as stumped today as the Greeks were two millennia ago is the source of human life. What powers the self-sustaining actions of our complex human body? We know the energy we get from food is able to run it, but it definitely isn't what started it.

It is that spark that somehow reverses the process of two dying cells into a self-sustaining cell that I am talking about. That spark is what I am calling the human spirit and I believe it is not of the physical although it influences the physical.

If it was from the physical, then we would be able to switch it on and off; whereas it can be argued that we are very much capable of switching it off as we are prone to do in murders and suicides. It is the switching on part that is not so easy to do. Matter of fact, I can comfortably say, it is impossible to do.

The day we learn how to, then we will have learnt to create life itself. We at this very moment as a species know enough to create cells from proteins, and proteins from molecules, molecules from elements, elements from atoms. The day we learn to ignite that bunch of proteins to start self-sustaining actions, then we will have learnt to create life itself. Because that is the singular difference between a living body and a dead one – the capacity to sustain itself, usually using energy from food and if there is no energy then breaking down parts of itself to sustain the essential parts – the concept of weight loss from dieting is developed from this very point.

If we had possession of this spark, then we could theoretically walk up to a body that has just died or died sometime back. Transfer that spark into whatever is left of the body and it would find a way to regrow itself into who that person was. Everything needed to grow a human body is available in nature, in abundance. What we do not have is that spark that can ignite life into those materials.

That fact that we have made no headway on this front points to a super-physical source of life, that cannot be discovered using all our current technology and this in turn points to a super-physical being capable of providing this spark. In Christianity we call this being, God. And as it so happens the Christian God is super-physical, the first mention of this

God in the bible is Genesis 1, 2 which says, "...And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters..." need I mention that physical things do not hover; especially, over water? That is a joke.

This then is *my* basis for the belief that we are created. That at the moment of my conception and yours, God gave part of *himself* to us – I am using him, simply for ease of communication, as already mentioned, God is not physical and as such has no need for gender. It is this part of himself bestowed upon us, that grants us life. Language betrays me at this point; because, when I say part of Himself, it may sound like I am saying, He broke off a part of himself and that part He made into us. That is definitely not what I am saying. Just like the Catholic Church teaches that in every particle of the Eucharist is the whole Jesus, so also we all are created from the same God.

We are therefore a product of three parents: a father who gives us 23 chromosomes packaged in a sperm, a mother who also gives us 23 chromosomes packaged in an ovum, and lastly God who provides the spark – His Spirit or more accurately a copy of His spirit – that ignites life into this new cell – you at your beginning - which goes on to divide and specialize until you are fully formed.

A human being then, in my humble opinion, is not just any one or two of these things. If any one of them is missing, then you are not fully human. A human being is like a chord made up of three notes in harmony; we exist from the harmonious coming together of three things: the human physical body – that allows us to function in this physical world; the human soul/mind – that operates the/in the human body, both consciously and subconsciously; and the human spirit – that brings life to everything, like electricity to a computer, allowing them to come together and work. It is the electricity that allows the hardware and the software to interact.

A computer can have its hardware intact and the latest software; but without electricity, it will just sit there; in the same way, a human being can have a pristine body, and the most illumined soul/mind; but without the spirit, no human being can exist; because a human being exists from the interaction of a soul running in a body powered by a spirit. The body grows, the soul learns, the spirit hold them together.

All three have to be in perfect harmony, each working as it should for the greater whole.

To use another analogy, that is all we can do, think of a lit electric bulb. The light is born from an interaction between electricity and the bulb. We are that light.

In my humble opinion this is what life is about; what the human journey is about – to learn to live a life that brings all three into perfect harmony.

The Human Being

A human being is a melodious note in harmony; which is more easily said than done. From my own life, I have found a temptation of referring to myself more as my mind/soul than any other part. However, my mind couldn't exist without my body, the mind/soul needs the brain to function, just like the brain needs the soul to be of use; and the brain as part of the body needs the spirit to exist, and the spirit is impotent power without a body. A human being in harmony then needs all these three working as they ought due to their innate natures; but also, working together as one.

The human body is a physical mass made up of living cells. There are specific requirements needed for the body to function as it ought, such as food, oxygen, water, exercise and so on. These and many more - such as the need to reproduce itself as all living things do – the body will demand for relentlessly. You could say, they are the inborn rights of the body and the body knows it. So, it constantly demands it's due. For the body to function as it was made to, these needs have to be provided; but in the right amount, for this reason, we have a soul/mind.

The human soul: from childhood, we learn things, from school, from friends, from our parents, from the media and so on, and so forth. The soul is in essence a collection of knowledge and experience, and all this knowledge that we collect, we use to decide on how to live. Like I already mentioned before, the choices and decisions we make, depend on the knowledge we have collected cumulatively called experience, we have attained. That is to say, our free will is influenced directly by our knowledge base.

To diverge a bit, this is the reason why we do not allow children to make decisions, especially life changing decisions; since, we – as adults - are certain, knowledge and experience, in a human being is attained with age. We want them to first learn more before deciding on important life choices.

As it is we learn more from our own experiences than we do from the experiences of others, this is the terrible predicament, parents everywhere face generation after generation as they try to stop their children from making the same mistakes they did and the children adamantly walk straight into them.

Therefore our soul is the cumulative collection of all our experiences – knowledge, thoughts, reasoning, judgment, memories, and so on.

This is how we are able to stop touching hot metals after being burnt before. It is also how we have learnt to limit how much food we ingest after suffering the effects of over eating; we have learnt to limit which kind of food we eat, after learning the effect of certain foods on our health; we have learnt to decide which kind of life styles to live after learning the consequences of certain life styles on our health and future.

However, as already mentioned, if I am ignorant about something, and sometimes not even knowing that I am ignorant about it, I will make a choice/decision that will have an effect I had not prepared for. This is the limitation of the human soul. It is no wonder that in the bible, the temptation to Adam and Eve was on knowledge, “But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:4-5

The devil in offering them that fruit was in essence saying, you can get all the knowledge of God in one go. You will not need to go through anything, to learn. The very opposite of what good parents tell their children as already mentioned above in the divergence: parents stop children from making life changing decisions because they know what you believe you want now can change after you have seen more of life.

To deepen more on the temptation of Adam and Eve, imagine a scenario where it is possible to download all the knowledge and experience of a 90 year old into a 5 year old. Theoretically, it sounds wonderful, this child would grow up knowing all the hurdles most people find out by themselves later on in life, especially after falling into them. So this would save the child a lot of pain; however, what could be the consequence of this action? Would all the hopes and dreams of childhood survive that encounter; would the innocence of childhood survive it; would the naïve belief in the goodness of the world survive it? And after answering those questions, would you say, you would still go through with it if given the opportunity?

It is no wonder then that this is what the bible records as the aftermath of that decision, “...she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” Genesis 3:6-7

It makes sense that this would be their reaction, the innocence of childhood is a belief in the goodness of the world; mainly because, they believe in their inherent goodness. Anyone who has been with children knows the worst attack you can make on them is call

them bad. Children believe they are good, and so the world must also be good. This is why they keep trusting and loving and caring; because, everyone they encounter is good.

Of course with time, they will find out that the world is not as good as they thought, but there are some good people in the world. This will educate their choices for life, always trying to look for that person who deserves their goodness. All this is only possible because, we experience things slowly by slowly. Our eyes are opened to the world's ways slowly by slowly. Some people are blessed to keep their innocence until they die. This is why some parents go to extra lengths to keep their children from seeing just how messed up the world really is.

On the other hand, if a child from 5 years finds out what exactly to expect in life, how vastly different would they act. With that sense of trust completely scorched out of them in one go, they would look at only the dark side of everything. And does it surprise that their first thought would be, "I am naked." A state of great shame in many human cultures; more so, in the culture of the Hebrews – in which the bible was written – were seeing the ankle of a woman is frowned upon.

The point I am driving at is, we learn from childhood all about life, and it is these lessons that educate our choices, our beliefs and our attitudes. It is this knowledge that dictates what we allow into our lives; what actions we take. Case in point, someone after experiencing some version of life decides to become a vegetarian; while another does not see the point of being a vegetarian. Each has reasons backing up their lifestyle. This plays into other parts of life, like dress code; how to eat; what to eat; religious beliefs; life plans and many more.

This brings us to the nature of the soul/mind. We mentioned above about the nature of the body and its needs. The soul too has its needs. They are specific for the soul and we have just been tackling one of them, permit me to put it crudely – the need to be relevant in the sense that, "I too have brain". We feel entitled to our opinions because of the knowledge we have accumulated. So a vegan may look down on the non-vegan, because it does not make sense to them why anyone would eat an animal which is sentient – it feels, it cares, it is like you, it's like being a cannibal. And the non-vegan may look down on the vegan as being overly sensitive. Don't animals eat each other all the time, it is biological. And the debate will rage on.

This too will play into other parts of life, like dress code and fashion; is my desire to wear a label mean I am shallow? Should I feel guilty for wearing a suit or driving a car that

could feed homeless people for years? Each will answer according to their experience, maybe there will always be homeless people, so I may as well live my life; or, it is my duty to look after the disadvantaged in society, because I have been so blessed. What is the right answer, what is the wrong answer or are all answers right meaning also all answers can also be wrong. “What is truth?” as Pilate asked Jesus.

It is this predicament that has always plagued humanity. There doesn't seem to be a universal truth we all can align to. Everyone's way seems to work very well for them. This has led to some asking what right have I to dictate to them what to do; or more commonly, what right do they have to dictate to me how I should live. After all, I too have my own life experiences that support my choices. Shouldn't we all be entitled to our choices? This is a common sentiment today.

On the other hand that same mentality has perpetuated a lot of pain; primarily because it has become obvious to us that we are too connected to not be concerned with the life of the other, since, what is affecting them today will affect you tomorrow, Covid 19 is the latest example. So then, what is the truth? That one value we all can align to. How can we know it?

This is a hard question, but in Christianity, we believe only God is the truth; and this is why we believe in God, we believe in the Bible and we believe that we are created in the image and likeness of God, in essence, making us children of God.

The story of Genesis for me is a story highlighting the human condition, our limitation as human beings; our inability to know it all; the mistakes we have made from this limitedness; all emphasize our need for guidance. This seems to be the nature of the spirit – a seeking for the immortal; what can last forever in this ever changing world; a search for its origin and consequently a need for a guide.

We often times seek this guidance from institutions, things that are greater than us; that seem to have found a secret of being immortal. Our seeking for guidance from such bodies is our acceptance of our own limitation. It's like we are saying, “By myself, I cannot be forever, but as part of this, I will be remembered forever, my name will be in the annals of history.”

So some will look for guidance from religions like Christianity; Islam; Hinduism and align their lives and values with the values of these religions. It helps that most of these religions teach a variation of ‘eternal life’ to their followers. Some will seek it from

institutions that look to have made it in the world like big multinational companies – you align your values with their values and you swear by their creed, and you are promised that your name will be known all over the world forever, maybe through accumulation of wealth or music or something. Some seek guidance from the supernatural – practitioners of voodoo and all other variations of witchcraft; these too are promised immortality in some form either here on earth as undying or after.

My point being, the need of the spirit is how to be immortal, no doubt because it is from eternity, and this craving prompts a search for how to be immortal. And this need too has to also be satisfied.

Every institution seems promise immortality. For example, becoming a Nobel Prize winner seems a way of attaining immortality. The different religions have different definitions of immortality too. The world has a different definition also, becoming the most celebrated musician in the world like Micheal Jackson, seems a form of immortality. So what is the right answer? Which creed should we align too that promises satisfaction for our yearning spirits?

In Christianity, we satisfy it by aligning our spirit with its source, and in Christianity that is God. We align with God mainly through the work we do. Augustine poetically stated it, “You have made us for yourself O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you.”^{vii} Our spirit desires to be in communion with its author. This is the nature of the spirit, constantly calling us to communion with the author of life. This is felt as a call to something other than us; as the psalmist says, “Deep calls to deep...” Psalms 42:7 Because, when you think about it, who is better than the eternal parent – who is all knowing – to guide us through this life.

I have mentioned all three different aspects of a human being with their needs and limitations. Ultimately, the work of the human being, you and I is to lean on each of our three powers the body, the soul/mind and the spirit to find the middle ground, the harmony and then allow ourselves to be guided. Any institution, religion or cult that asks you to suspend the use of any of your powers – body, soul, spirit for their sake, should be taken with caution.

In essence, our aim is to foster our innate human desire to seek truth through, faith and reason, as stated beautifully in *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason) by Pope John Paul II: "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the

contemplation of truth."^{viii} And as the popular quote goes, "what you seek is also seeking you" we know that, we are not alone in our endeavor. Our Father is seeking us too.

You are not your body, you are not just the needs of your body, this is why some people fast to intentionally deny the body what it craves, so that they can grow closer to their heavenly father, as Jesus did for 40 days in the desert.

You are not your soul/mind alone that everything must be reasoned to your liking, there will always be something you don't know; hence the reason why we are sometimes expected to take things by faith, a reminder that we are not omniscient – all knowing.

You are not just your spirit that the cares of this world mean nothing to you, all you want is to go to heaven. It would be wasted time for you to have been here in the first place if you were not meant to see and enjoy this world and all its beauty. This life is a gift from God meant to be savored.

You are not just your body and soul – as some science will have you believe, only body and soul will make you an animal, only concerned about the here and now, yet you are capable of eternal life with God, which is already in you.

You are not just your soul and spirit as some religions will have you believe; only soul and spirit will make you an angel, not a human being who is born out of the soil – humus from which your name comes, and born into the world. Your body is an essential part of who you are.

And lastly, you are not just your spirit and body – that would make you a robot, incapable of your own thoughts and judgments. The great mind you have will have been put to no use if everything you do is dictated to you. It's alright to question, to seek more understanding, more wisdom; it is why you have a soul that is unquenchable, always seeking more.

You are not any one or two but all three; like the three body problem, something that has fascinated physicists for years, where a body's path cannot be determined because it is being influenced by two other bodies. Classical physics can calculate the path of a body in a two body problem, like the earth and moon, or the earth and the sun. That's how we are able to predict the next eclipse to the minute even if it is 20 years away. That's how we know Halley's Comet will be back in June of 2061. However, if it is three bodies going around each other, every calculation goes out the window; because, each of those bodies

is influencing the others. That's a human being, a miniature three body problem, made up of a body, a soul and a spirit; their confounding influence on each other ultimately creating you. We are all three but one person.

Having said all that, and to summarize it all, lest you forget, you are a mystery.

The above was an attempt to define a human being from first principles, while basing solely on observation – to an extent. I attempted to show that one of the first things we can all agree about a human being is that, we have a body, a complex piece of machinery that interacts with the physical world; second, I attempted to show that, we have a soul/mind that runs the body and runs in the body. The soul is our cumulative cache of knowledge and experience, in other words, our soul is all we have learnt, from the womb up to now.

And lastly I attempted to show that these by themselves, while adequate to define a human being as a rational animal, is not enough to truly define us; because they lack the last and most important aspect, a life-giving aspect. My argument was that the soul and body in and of themselves are capable of life sustaining actions like breathing, cell division, and so on; but, they cannot explain how that life began that they sustain; nor can these action in and of themselves bring back life to the body once death has occurred. I thus theorized that there is a third part, which I called the human spirit that gives life; it is this spirit that we receive from the Father and that enlivens the body-soul; it melds the two together to form a full human being. It is this spark that exists in all living things; thus, sustaining them. It is this spirit that draws us back to our source; the same spirit that reminds us that we may be made of earthen vessels; but, we are not of this world. We belong to God.

From childhood, the body-soul union was a very confusing concept; especially the soul, which at one point could be referred to as a soul – the observer, the conscious me and at other times, the spirit – what remains after death, what stands before God in judgment. And then there was the Holy Spirit that we received at baptism. Part 1 was a way to reconcile this.

I sincerely hope my attempt was worthy of your time.

In second part, I will be trying to redo the above but from a different perspective. I will dwell more on the Biblical perspective, like a good catholic, while speculating on the meaning and message in the creative narrative. I will wrangle up every idea and theory I

know to try and adumbrate on this gem. It is called 'the creation of man.' You are most welcome.

Part Two

The Creation of Man

In the beginning of Genesis chapter 1, God is referred to as Spirit, and the defining characteristic of a spirit is non-corporeality; that is, not having a physical/material body. The verse is quoted, "...And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Genesis 1:2.

This means that God is Spirit and from our understanding so far, we understand that the body is built from physical matter; it's made of atoms, that work together to form a body; in summary our bodies are a complex machine.

We understand that the soul consciously and subconsciously run the body and run in the body; the soul/mind cannot exist without the body. Our entire cache of knowledge and experiences are stored as synapses firing in the brain; with every new thing we learn, a new neural pathway is opened in the brain.

Consciously is when you decide to turn a page of a book and your hand/finger does so; subconsciously is without your conscious decision like the rhythm of your beating heart; like the decision to retain some things and forget others; and so many other processes that are not under our conscious choice but nonetheless influence us.

As mentioned above, for everything new we learn, a new neural pathway is created in the brain. Therefore this means that what we learn translates somehow into the structure of the body; emphasizing further the profound connection between the body and soul. We are the climax of this deep marriage.

However, as we also saw earlier, both of these by themselves are not capable of creating life. The body and soul by themselves only breakdown and die; a dead person has his body and his mind is still intact but somehow the capacity to sustain life is not there anymore.

The body and soul are not capable of starting; of being the spark that starts a new life. However those two joined together – as we see at fertilization with the body represented by only one cell of 46 chromosomes and the soul a wisp of what it will grow into, since the soul/mind grows from learning – is the perfect environment for the third part of the human being; the spirit; the spirit which is the source of life, the spark that marries the body and the soul; melding all three together to make one whole human being.

God is Spirit; that means, God is life, therefore, everything from him is life-giving. No wonder when he gives himself to us; a copy of His Spirit, we take on life; hence the verse, we are made in His image (Imago Dei).

At the creation of man, this is how the bible tells it, "...then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." Genesis 2:7

Notice how first God makes the body of man, no doubt with the soul/mind already inbuilt – that is, the capacity to learn; just like that first cell in the womb of a woman. I bet you there is no difference between that body made of dust that God molded and that first cell formed from the joining together of the sperm and ovum – they are both completely physical entities; of course other than the size; but that is negligible as the one cell will in a few months multiply to make the full body. Other than that, I believe they are exactly identical, if left alone, they would both start breaking up and dying.

But then He (God) blows into the man's nostrils – passing on to the man an essence that brings man to life, and he becomes a living creature. The body He forms from dust; but to bring it to life, He breathes into the body, giving it something from His own 'body'. I am no bible scholar, but from my few classes in Old Testament, I remember that the word breathe as used there is 'ruach' the Hebrew word for "spirit" (רוח), which has a wide range of meanings, including breath, wind, and mind.

So the man at this moment is fully formed with a body to work in the physical world; a soul to think, plan, remember and do all the other high cognition functions, like create, edit, remake and so on and so forth; and lastly a spirit – the essence of God to birth man; fully formed with a will and a purpose, to be a carrier of the mind of God; to be the mind of God in the physical world.

The following should then make a lot more sense, "15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it." Man was meant to work from the very beginning not to laze around eating fruits as it is sometimes portrayed in media. He was meant to put the body and the mind to work keeping the garden. This shows there must have been work that needed doing; maybe a cow that needed help birthing; or a fruit tree that needed pruning and manuring; or maybe a cat stuck in a tree that needed rescuing; or maybe a hoof that needed trimming. The short of it is that there must have been work that needed a man to do.

“16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:15-17

Now my first instinct was to think of the trees God is talking about as food, and God asking man to eat; but then, how come the other tree, the one in the middle of the garden is a tree of “knowledge.” Shouldn’t that presuppose that all the other trees spoken of in this whole verse could also refer to knowledge of some kind, rather than food; such that when this whole verse is paraphrased to try and explain what God was saying, it would be something like,

“You may surely eat of every tree of the garden - you may surely accumulate all the knowledge you can from the garden; you may experiment on how to work and keep the garden; you may try different kinds of farming and growing food; building and housing the animals; accumulating knowledge as you go along; you be man and explore...

but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat – but about the knowledge on what is right and what is wrong; knowledge on identity of who is good and who is bad; you shall not attain for yourself; because, this knowledge is impossible for you to get right, you are not omniscient; or rather, you are not yet omniscient...

For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die – because in the day you decide these things for yourself, I will no longer be necessary in your life, and without me in your life, you will die. It is my spirit that gives you life, once you disconnect yourself from me, you will die.”

The above is a sort of amplified paraphrase of what I believe those two verses mean. It is the sort of thing human parents have been telling their adolescent children since time immemorial. “You think you know what is up, but you don’t. Your experience is still so limited to know what life is about, please allow me to guide you.” And since time immemorial like our first parents, the answer to that has more often than not been, “Mom, Dad, I know what I am doing.” Except in the case of Adam and Eve, the choice to do it themselves caused a lot more harm than they had expected.

What I have outlined so far is this:

God - a being so incomparable to anything we have as to be from a whole new dimension – in order to create us, reached into our plane of existence and using the matter that is in

this plane of existence – dust – as it is called, formed us. Just like when we want to draw a two dimensional object, like a box, we use lines. But when we want to turn that box into a three dimensional object, we have to impart on it an aspect from our dimension that is not of the two dimensional world, that is depth. Now the box has existence in two dimensions, both the two and the three dimensions.

The only way God could make us enter into his plane of existence, was He had to impart on us an aspect from His dimension. And that aspect was His Spirit. That aspect is what gives us and all other living things a uniqueness that is not found anywhere else on the material plane, life. It is written, God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” Genesis 1:26.

God who is spirit, wanting to make us like Him, imparted on us something of His core nature, his spirit, which I am calling the human spirit – ‘built’ like God’s spirit; that is life giving and immortal, but different from God’s spirit, since it is not eternal like Him. We were meant to be in the physical world; meant to work with the body and the soul; but never forget that we are children with a parent, an eternal parent, who created us, and craves our company, who is waiting for us to spend eternity with Him. We were meant to turn this world into a temple/family home of our parent.

Augustine after realizing something about God, something that should have been obvious, wrote:

“Too late have I loved you, O Beauty so ancient, O Beauty so new. Too late have I loved you! You were within me but I was outside myself, and there I sought you! In my weakness, I ran after the beauty of the things you have made. You were with me, and I was not with you. The things you have made kept me from you – the things which would have no being unless they existed in you! You have called, you have cried, and you have pierced my deafness. You have radiated forth, you have shined out brightly, and you have dispelled my blindness. You have sent forth your fragrance, and I have breathed it in, and I long for you. I have tasted you, and I hunger and thirst for you. You have touched me, and I ardently desire your peace.”^{ix}

Why is this obvious thing not obvious to us? Why do we find ourselves seeking God in everything else but the one place we should look? Inside ourselves!

The Fall of Man

Act I: The Overture

“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” Genesis 3:1

This is the question the crafty serpent - representing the devil or more precisely all that seeks to separate us from our purpose, be it the devil as explained in religious circles or our ego – asked the woman according to the Hebrew Scriptures. Why the woman and not the man? There have been many answers to this, but some of my favorites are:

One. Because she was not there at the time God was telling the man not to eat of the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. If you re-read the passage from Genesis 2, 17, you will notice that, this happened before God created the woman, which happens in verse 22. As if insinuating that for the most time, when the temptation will come, it will not be on things you experienced, but things you heard about. In other words, there is no reason for the devil to tempt you on what you are certain of, and Adam was very certain of what God had told him, whereas Eve received second hand information from Adam. The sort of information we all have about God. So in a sense, these writers were saying, we are all Eve, since all the knowledge we have of God is secondhand; and therefore, easy to doubt and second-guess. The temptation will always come from our places of weakness, of uncertainty, of doubt, making it easier for us to fail.

St. Ignatius in his spiritual exercises says, like a captain, the devil will walk around your wall and find the place that is weakest^x. This is the place he will attack: maybe my self-image prompting me to seek external validation in various destructive ways; maybe your sense of self-worth prompting you to seek success at all costs to show that you are worthy; maybe my desire to feel secure prompting me hoard more wealth than I will ever need; the list goes on and on. The point of the matter is, the tempted has always been you and I, in our garden.

The second for it being Eve is probably because, she had more influence in the relationship. If you think about it, you realize, there is no point in trying to turn the weaker party; since, they will have no capacity to influence the stronger. Instead, you turn the stronger, who will in turn influence all those that he or she has power over. I believe these writers wanted to emphasize the immense power the woman has always had over man, that is why the tempter went to her, very well knowing, if she was led astray, she could easily lead the man astray. This could be areas in our lives we are mighty certain about, or those times we feel so sure of ourselves. Maybe because we have attained great places in the world, or we have found out we have quite an influence on people.

Pardon that digression, so Eve is asked, is it true God said, you cannot do anything for yourself, but sit around all day and wait for Him to spoon-feed you?

I am constantly surprised when I hear how many people believe this; believe that God hates science and exploration, He hates people discovering new things like vaccines and new treatment regimens and new drugs. I don't understand why someone would believe that He (God) would make us curious, and creative; put us in a place that will test us and challenge us; thus prompt us to think of solutions, all the while wanting us to sit on our hands.

I feel like that is exactly what that question was meant to insinuate, a God who is so insecure that He would rather we strangle our basic instinct of exploration, than be like Him – creative. And so many times, we have believed that this is what God actually wants.

This is the basic understanding some people have of God, a super controlling deity who is willing to do just about anything to keep in power; including but not limited to, killing and burning people who threaten his power.

Does that sound familiar? It should, because that is exactly what all human dictators since the beginning of time have done. Once man gets power, then he ought to do all he can to never let it go. So even our god should be exactly like that. The Greeks had their version of this, Kronos is told that one of his children is going to overthrow him, just like he overthrew his father Uranus. And what does he do, well he swallows each of his children upon birth, forcing his wife Rhea to trick him into swallowing a rock while she hid their child Zeus, who would later on overthrew his father; the very actions done in trying to keep the power; ultimately, cause the downfall as so many dictators have learnt to their downfall. Pardon that digression too.

This is the question the serpent asked Eve, “Is it true, God does not want you to use your abilities to explore this world; He does not want you to be human – and be creative and curious, and innovative and adaptive?” A question I need not mention, is completely opposite of exactly what God had said in Gen 2, 16: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden...”

It was a question meant to immediately paint their benefactor in a negative light; but more importantly, draw her into a conversation.

Act II: The Hook

And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.” Genesis 3:2-3

I would encourage anyone reading this to first close the book and spend some time thinking about this scene – Ignatian Contemplation. Try to imagine it, how does Eve answer the serpent, is it with respect as we are taught to answer to all adults, even ignorant ones, or does she look down on him and answer scornfully, as if wondering at the ignorance of this creature. And how does the serpent appear, does he appear as a serpent or as a man; does he appear as a very reasonable serpent/person who is ignorant or full of mischief in his eyes, as he tries to lead her astray. How do you imagine the devil would appear when he is tempting you? With horns and a tail? Or as a regular person? Does he look distinguished – like someone you should listen to or dirty, like a street person – someone to ignore? The bible does not tell us how he appeared to Eve other than as a serpent; but we do know, Eve chose to not only speak but listen to him.

Eve answers back correcting the serpent – showing she had knowledge of what God had told Adam – she informs the serpent that, God had in no way told them sit on their hands. He had in fact commanded them to eat of any tree in the garden. That is, they could explore and be who He had created them to be; like children, they could taste and see everything that was in the house.

However, she tells him, He had forbidden them from one particular tree; whose knowledge – fruits, were dangerous for them. If they even just touched that tree, they would die. But which kind of knowledge is that?

The tree of the knowledge of what is good and what is bad. The tree that once you have eaten of it, you can judge for yourself, what is right and what is wrong; you would essentially become a master of your own life. You would no longer need a teacher or guide, more accurately you would no longer need a parent. You would have become an adult, capable of deciding for yourself what is right and what is wrong.

This tree’s importance is so central that it is planted in the middle of the garden, so you can never mistake it for anything else. Seeing as such a mistake would be disastrous.

Knowledge of what is good and what is bad forms the basis for moral reasoning, ethical decision making, and social cohesion. It guides the decision making of individuals,

communities and societies. If you are to look around where you are right now; you will find its use everywhere. In the programs we watch, in the types of education we have, in the policies of government and so on and so forth.

Everything we do in the world is underlined by the question, “Is this right?” and that requires knowledge of what is good and what is bad.

Makes you wonder, why did God forbid them from eating of it in the first place.

God had allowed them to eat of any tree in the garden; essentially saying, it is okay for you to do this by yourselves. As I already mentioned above, if we think of these other trees as also trees of knowledge like the tree in the middle of the garden; what He was saying was, it is okay for you to discover and grow your own knowledge base; I already created you with the capacity to do so. We know this to be true, since humanity has indeed grown a veritable cache of knowledge on the natural world, and it is still updating that cache to date. The scientific method has been essential in this endeavor and we are still pushing horizons.

This information has made the world a better place to live in, we have in many ways made the world better through accumulation of this knowledge. The advantages of the scientific age are too numerous to outline here. I am in no way saying the world is perfect, we all know it is not; but, we are living in an age better than before, and that has been true for every generation. We have improved – however slightly - with every generation, and that is to a great extent due to the accumulation of knowledge both scientific and social.

However God forbade them from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Why that specific tree? Really the question is, why that specific knowledge?

Act III: The Gambit

4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
Genesis 3:4-5

I have learnt from the many spy movies and novels I have watched and read, that the best lies are those with some truth in them. Take for instance, if I said that black people and white are two different species, like a horse and zebra, that is too bold a lie. Anyone with an iota of reasoning will poke holes through that argument.

However, when you say, they really are the same species, just different races; with one higher than the other. That is harder to unravel, because, our own experience seems to say the same thing; because, one is so technologically advanced than the other, to make the argument seem right. It will take a deeper and more thorough form of reasoning to

find the holes in that argument. Until you realize that, deciding one race is superior to another based solely on technological advancement is equivalent to saying one type of fish is superior to another simply because it is a faster swimmer. What about their beauty, some fish are stunning in appearance; what about their mating rituals; some have very detailed and intricate rituals that show forth their creativity; what about their community life. The standards are many, and if you are to take into account all those standards, you will find, each type of fish is unique and beautiful, exactly how they were meant to be seen by their creator.

The serpent has made a bold and calculated move. He has in not many words called God a liar and made himself the teller of truth. He tells Eve, “Not really, what God told you is not entirely the truth. You see, what God is keeping from you is this, when you eat that fruit; you will no longer be children. You will be like you parent, God. Don’t you see that He knows everything; don’t you find that attractive? Well when you eat of that tree, you will become like Him, capable of knowing what is good and what is bad. You will have become adults, no need to learn things ever so slowly, one thing at a time, and all that. In one go, you will be as wise as God.”

I believe this is the reason why Eve found the tree appealing. The bible says, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” Genesis 3:6

How did the serpent make the tree appealing so much so that, they disregarded the direct command of their Parent? The serpent made it seem like it is a good idea; the sort of idea that God would love; he told them, eating the fruit would make them become like the most beautiful person they knew; the most perfect being they had ever had the grace of encountering, God; all the while, encouraging them to disobey God’s command. Can you appreciate how diabolically clever that is? If this is the same level of craftiness he is using on us, how can we hope to ever beat him?

This seems to be the offer he makes always. He promises to get you something impossibly big, at the lowest cost. In the gospel of Matthew, for his final temptation, “the devil took him (Jesus) to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Matthew 4:8-9

In this one temptation, the devil, whom Jesus called the prince of the world – sort of informing us that he does have power in the world, promises to give Jesus everything without Jesus having to do a single thing other than to worship him. We know that later

on Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Matthew 28:18 After Him (Jesus) going through all the trials and tribulations of preaching the word of God; of being both refused and accepted by many; of being hungry and tired; of ultimately being killed fulfilling his mission. God gives everything to Him. But in this one temptation, the devil is offering it all, without him having to go through all that, for a very small price. Or at least that is how he makes it look.

It seems that is how he does it, he wraps poison in a beautiful shiny apple. And unfortunately, our first parents fell for it.

That Genesis scene reminds me of that scene in Act 4, Scene I of Shakespeare’s Macbeth, where the three witches after starting Macbeth on a path of destruction in a bid to become the King of Scotland, conjure three apparitions that deliver messages that are very cryptic; one such message being, no man born of a woman can harm him, and the other that he will not be defeated until Birnam Wood – a forest - comes to Dunsinane Hill. These messages give him a false sense of security and ultimately leading to his death.

Imagine being given an assurance that nothing can harm you until a certain forest moves; you will be pretty certain of your invisibility. That is until you learn that what the message actually meant was that the people who will attack your stronghold, will be carrying branches from that forest to hide from your archers. By then of course it is too late. Pardon the digression.

The serpent promises the couple that when they eat the fruit, “...your eyes will be opened...” but fails to mention, what they would see.

Act IV: The Fall

“7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.” Genesis 3:7

This can be related to the first time, you noticed something about yourself that you decided was not good; something I believe we all can relate to, most unfortunately.

Isn’t it terrible that we all can relate to that sentiment? That every single one of us have looked at ourselves in the mirror and noticed that something, and decided that is not good; I am too small or I am too fat; I am too tall or I am too short; I am too light skinned or too dark skinned; my voice is not good, my hair is not good, my feet, my toes, my heel the list is literally endless, when it comes to the faults we find with ourselves and consequently with others. That is a consequence of knowledge of good and evil. God knew all this, and so stopped them from eating it; but they didn’t and so they ate.

How often have parents and guardians wished to save their children from that terrible pain; and how hopeless a sentiment that has been. We seem wired to look at the wrong; no matter how high we fly. I am thunderstruck whenever I see some of the most beautiful people I know sigh at some perceived imperfection.

That is the point, isn't? That we seem oblivious to our own strengths, so we pay attentions to the weaknesses; or worse, if we do know our strengths, we exaggerate them to the point of narcissism, as if we are trying to overcompensate for some perceived weakness.

God had told them, for this specific knowledge, never seek it for yourselves, because the day you will do so, is the day you will die. Maybe He should have added, "You will die many many times even before your eventual physical death. Every time you will notice something bad about yourself, something in you will die. You will die every time someone tells you how ugly you are, how dumb, how stupid, how uncool you are. Your life will be a series of dying. And when your time on earth is up, you will not welcome your death because you will still be trying to be better; yet I created you perfect." So many times we think God said so because he is some megalomaniac who wants to stay in control. Yet all along, as He it has always been, it was for our good.

How insanely beautiful would it be if the self-image we carried for our entire lifetime was from the two people who loved us the most? Not exaggerated in any way but a clear picture of who we are, as seen through the lenses of love; we would know our strengths clearly and be proud of them; and our limitations clearly and strive to eradicate them.

Alas, this will never be, not in this lifetime; because, when Adam and Eve ate that fruit, they introduced into the world – knowledge of good and evil. So, instead of us learning from God what is good and what is evil, this knowledge was laid at our feet to decide for ourselves. And what a mess of things we have made.

I cannot argue that I know for a fact that Eden existed. Even amongst distinguished Christian theologians, this is no simple answer. It is one of those things that I guess we will never know with certitude.

But when I look at our world, one thing is glaringly clear; we could be a lot more than we are. Every generation is born thinking, well we got the answer. And then, somehow along the way, same old, same old. You cannot think about life too closely and you don't reach the same sort of conclusion – this world is fallen.

This state of nature clearly sets the stage for presenting two contrasting perspectives on the origin of good and bad:

On one hand, one could argue that the way things are now is the way things have always been since the first man and woman. This perspective suggests that we are inherently flawed creatures and deserve the consequences of our actions. We can savor the good moments, but we must also bear the bad since we are the cause of them. Furthermore, there is no need to have any hope for the future because expecting good from inherently bad or flawed beings is pointless. It's like expecting good fruit from a bad tree—it just doesn't make sense.

If we are innately bad, then morals and good behavior become unnecessary, as they are based on the hope that we can care for others beyond ourselves. This hope would be futile if we are naturally selfish and flawed. Consequently, whatever life you choose, you must accept that others can choose a completely opposite life and be equally entitled to their choices. This leads to a state where moral standards and collective improvement become irrelevant. The list of implications goes on, but this captures the essence.

On the other hand, one might believe that we are inherently good and perfect beings, but that something significant happened in our past which caused us to lose our way. Despite this, we are innately good, loving, and caring people who naturally want to do good for others, be helpful, trusting, and full of hope—just like little children. However, due to whatever event disrupted our path, we struggle to fully realize this goodness. But we keep on trying.

All we need is the opportunity, guidance, and a chance to do our best. Even though we will inevitably fail because we are not perfect, our imperfection does not define who we are. We are made of greater stuff. We can take responsibility for the pain we have caused through our actions, but the general fallen nature of humanity is not something for which I or any individual can be blamed. No single person has that much power over all of us, except perhaps the first parents of humanity—Adam and Eve, hence the significance of their story.

This is the story of Christianity: a story of recognizing our weaknesses and limitations, and striving to overcome them, not to cover them up; a story of a savior who comes and leads us back to our original grace.

Act V: The Fall out

God comes into the garden to visit His children; maybe to bring some news; maybe to teach them something new; maybe to spend some time with them, eat some food, dance,

tell stories, go on walks; the list is endless of what parents like doing with their children. And the following ensues:

“8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” Genesis 3:8-9 come let us hang out.

But something has changed, Adam answers, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” Genesis 3:10

This is the first registered episode of ‘fear’ in the bible. We shall see more of it many many time. I can just imagine how God’s heart fell at this answer, like that moment a loved one does something or answers you in a way you did not expect and you know, something terrible has happened, something has changed, and you know you are about to be visited by an ocean of pain. God’s answer tells it all, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” Genesis 3:11

Who told you? Who told you that you are naked? It’s like God is saying, I am the only one who is supposed to tell you who you are, so who gave you this information. Did you allow someone else to teach you; to lead you astray? Did you eat of the one tree I told you not to? Allowing yourselves to be influenced by someone who is not me; and knowledge that you were not ready for? Did you just cut yourselves off from me?

What follows is something we are all used to, everyone playing the victim, it is not my fault. And then God declares to them the consequence of their choice. As if saying, since you wanted to no longer be children; whom I am guiding and teaching; showing the way; educating on truth; since, you no longer wanted to be children under my care and protection and instead chose to listen to someone else; since you no longer wanted to be my children, but chose to be adults, you must also face the consequences of your choices like adults. You will work and it will never be enough.

By this stage, it is done. Something has happened that we can never truly understand; man has lost something, and since man was the head of all creation, creation also lost. It is signaled by something in the next verses, “And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.” Genesis 3:21. This is the first time a life is taken; the first time an animal is killed in the bible and blood is poured for the sake of man, and it is God who does it.

Creation has fallen too; it has become a tool to be used. In case you are wondering whether man had been eating meat before, all you have to do is read a few verses earlier,

“And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. Genesis 1:29-30 we were never meant to eat animals; but after the fall, God was the first to kill an animal for our sake.

Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” Genesis 3:22

Well we know what happens next, they are driven out of the garden lest they eat and live forever. We wouldn't want that I can tell you. Can you imagine if all the baddies of human history are still alive? No matter how bad one becomes; no matter how much power, wealth and authority they accumulate; we are consoled by one thing, they will die one day. This is why they had to be driven from the garden; and since, they didn't eat of the tree of life, and thereby attain immortality, so we too don't have immortality.

We can be good for our lifetime which is good; and bad only in our lifetime, which is also good.

The End.

That marks the end of part 2 - an attempt at an in-depth journey into the creation and fall of man basing on the biblical narrative. The creation of man from dust was always easier for me to understand than the fall of man. As a child it made sense that man was from the dust because when he died, he turned back into dust. But the fall of man was always so confusing, how could a couple eating an 'apple' a thousand years ago be the cause of all we are suffering? And the apple was sometimes interpreted as meaning sex, which was even more baffling.

Part 2 has been an attempt to interpret the creation and fall of man in a way that makes sense to me. In part 1 we saw man as a body, a soul and a spirit; the spirit being the connection/the DNA that connects God to man. In part 2, we saw that after God creating man, he instituted him in a garden and allowed him to be man - to co-create. However, God cautions man about his freedom; God tells man that he (man) is free to do all he wants, but there are some things he should not seek to do for himself; things, only God can give him. Knowledge of these things is restricted.

Later on, we see that man is tempted by a serpent – an enemy of the family of God – who encourages man, using very crafty speech, to disobey God. And in so doing, Man loses the protection and guidance of his benefactor and parent.

But this still begs the question, how does that relate to us?

Part 3 will attempt to answer that. It is a building on what we have so far discussed in part 1 and 2.

Part 3 and 4 will be an attempt to deepen further the consequence of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. These sections are predicated on the concept that every action of man has consequence not just in the physical realm but also in the spiritual realm. This is because, when God created man, He gave him His spirit, consequently granting man the capacity to influence the realm where God lives; which would not have been possible if man was simply a body and a soul.

The method will be the same as before, where possible, I will just outline; and where not possible, using stories to try and explain the very complex; as before I will use everything at my disposal to bring out my thoughts on the subject. As part 2 was predominantly from the perspective of the human; this third and fourth part will be from the perspective of God (speculatively of course).

You are most welcome.

Part Three

Bereshit (In the Beginning of...)

I have always loved stories; let me tell you a story.

Once upon a time, in an eternal realm, there existed... God, a Spirit entwined in three distinct persons bound by an unbreakable force, a force so strong that the three persons were/are in fact one. This force we shall call, love.

It is through love that the three were one; united in perfect love and harmony; each person sharing in the same divine nature – that is, of one substance - and thus each possessing the fullness of God's attributes; the relationship between the three persons, eternal and unchanging^{xi}.

It is all so very confusing, but then again, this is God we are talking about. He cannot be anything but mysterious. Where was I? Oh yes, their relationship eternal, it had been so, and will forever be so; however, if it had remained so, then we would have no need for a story; because, it would be a very boring story....duh!

Have you ever tried to tell a story about someone living in an eternally perfect world? I should hope not, it can be unbelievably dull. Nothing ever happens in a perfect world, a glass falls down and then, wonder of wonders, it breaks up into perfectly shaped shards that a baby could crawl over without any fear. What sort of story would that be, hmmm? So, be glad, be very glad, that is not this story, this story takes on life.

Eager to share the love and unity they experienced, God created a man and a woman; two beings who are distinct, but share the same substance too – human-ness. And the plan was, these two beings would embark on a lifelong journey towards unity, mirroring the divine bond of their Creator and parent God. They would learn to love, like God; and live like God; because, as you may have already guessed, they were meant to be like God; to become God^{xii}. Talk about planned parenting.

After their lifelong journey of learning from God, they were to become like their parent - God. It may all seem a bit convoluted; I mean, why not just make them like God from the beginning; but, if you think about it, not so easy. I shouldn't know, I have never been God. But let us think about it.

God was beginning His family; the eternally perfect God decides out of love to have eternally perfect children. How can this be done, seeing as the Eternal One is existing in a state of perfection and completeness; lacking nothing and needing nothing; perfect in

every way; and therefore impossible to replicate? Impossible to replicate because there can only be one Eternal One; the law of non-contradiction and all that. Think of a glass full to the brim of water; that is God. There is no place for more water; because, the glass is full; that is what it means, to be perfect and complete. Everything that is, is perfectly completely filled by Him; because, it is He that allows it to be; He that sustains it. Okay enough philosophizing, let us go back to the story, the good stuff.

However, nothing is impossible for God, and so, a way availed itself; in order for the Triune parent to have children, He decided to first create a new being – a human being, and imbue that being with primitive attributes of their nature;

1. A need for community – to love, to be part of something, to start a family, to be loved, to reproduce and so on and so forth;
2. A need for purpose – a need for fulfillment, to have a legacy, to work and be recognized, to be valued, to have impact, this list is endless.

Then the Triune parent would slowly and meticulously cultivate, develop, educate, edify and foster their young, burgeoning, unversed but blossoming baby-gods into eternity; to become like them. It was all beautiful and lovely.

Drawing their children from the state they were in to become like them would require putting their children; these baby-gods into a grinder; because, how else are they to learn about love without experiencing love; learn forgiveness without forgiving or being forgiven; learn generosity without giving; learn patience without cultivating it; learn faithfulness without being faithful; learn contentment without... well you get the picture. This grinder was to be life, which would teach the children all this.

“Will they ever understand what we are doing? That this is the only way?” One parent would have asked, and one of the others would have answered, “They will understand. They too will learn that you must let a child slip and fall down, if you want them to learn how to walk; fall, if you want them to learn how to run. They will learn that if you coddle the child and pamper them, then they will never learn anything. They will learn that what the child needs is the security of knowing that the parent is there, so they can explore. Hopefully, this will educate them on what we are doing.”

So, in a new realm designed for the children, a realm of the physical, where purpose thrived, God crafted the man and the woman from the very dust of its existence. They were formed with its matter; because, they needed to be part of it fundamentally; subject and accountable to its laws.

And then, to fulfill the first objective, they were created two – a man and a woman; different but the same. They would learn from each other how to be a community – two but one.

And to fulfill the second objective, the Creator-parent tasked the first human parents with a sacred mission, to find their purpose in this realm. In doing so they would find out, the answer to the questions, “Who am I? Why am I here?” which would be the answer to their purpose in the physical realm. In this way, they would learn slowly by slowly to be like their parent God.

Only after they have found out for themselves the unity born out of love by experiencing it in all its facets and identifying who they are, and their purpose; only then would they be able to rise above the physical realm and its pre-ordained laws; only then could they sit with their parent – God; since, they now understood what it meant to be like God. They would know, in knowing they would love and in loving they would serve.

But this was too elephantine a mission to be laid at the feet of a child, baby-god or not; so the creator parents equipped them with a secret, a cheat-sheet you could say, so they would never be lost or too adrift to find their way back to their original purpose. The man and the woman were endowed with the spirit of the creator – a part of the Eternal One to become an intrinsic part of them. So that they would forever be in constant communion with their Creator-parent, singular in union and purpose, and they were entrusted with a sacred duty – to become stewards of the physical realm, co-creators with their parent, to sort of start being what they were meant to be.

And for some time, all was well, they lived in the presence of their creator, living and growing and learning and it was perfect. But like I said, perfect stories don’t put food on the table. And no matter how much a parent would love nothing more than to shelter their children, at a certain point, they must accept and allow the children to be their own person, and make their own mistakes.

Ask any parent, they don’t want it; but, they cannot stop it. If you try to stop it forcefully, by say, locking up the child in a tower, you end up causing more harm; dragons and princes in shining armor start getting involved causing all sorts of cacophony, and we don’t want that.

The creator-parent knew all of this of course, and so, cautioned the children in a way that they could understand, they have freedom, yes but it must be guided; they are not free to do whatever they want; such freedom doesn’t exist and to seek it is to destroy oneself. Of

course it was said more poetically, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

However, temptation lurked in the shadows, disguised as a promise of godhood in the fastest way possible; a promise of knowledge that would transform them immediately and radically into hallowed beings. They would be just like their Creator-parent. It would be so easy, and the reward would be unfathomable. All it would require them to do is step-out of the protection of their parent; step-out of the presence of God; step-out of God’s authority - just a little step; yes, was a risk but a small risk, and the rewards...oh, the rewards would be worth it.

Seduced by the allure of power and autonomy, the man and the woman succumbed to the temptation, and in so doing broke the sacred covenant with their Creator, the very covenant that was their protection and shield against all sorts of terrible malevolent forces. In that fateful moment, the bond between Creator and creation shattered, leaving the children adrift in a world devoid of divine guidance.

You see the spirit that was in them, was the divine connection, like a receiver, between them and their creator-parent; the seal of promise that was slowly drawing them on the path to become like their parent. And the minute they chose to step-out of their parent’s wing, that connection broke; because, in the realm of their parent, the Creator-God, anything that went against His perfect will was either cast out of His presence or immediately un-existed; darkness cannot exist in light.

Let us analogize a bit more, imagine our solar system, the sun reigning supreme over the entire area of its authority. Everything within that domain runs according to the sun’s gravity; its authority is absolute, unquestionable, unyielding. As long as you are in its presence, you cannot do anything other than what you are determined to do. That’s how we are able to calculate that Halley’s Comet returns to our sky every 76 years; because, that is what it must do. There is no bargain that maybe it can come a year earlier or a year later, we expect it 2061, it will be here in 2061.

As long as you are in the sun’s domain, you follow its rules; there is no choice to be contrary; and if you are contrary, then you are no longer in its domain. That gives you the idea of how absolute the domain of the parent-God is; and once the children disobeyed, they were no longer under the domain and protection of their parent-God. To stay would have meant to be un-existed from reality.

So, cast out from the presence of God, the man and the woman faced the consequences of their choice. The Creator's spirit was not taken from them; because, it is part of them, they were after all still begotten of God. However, their human-spirit was no longer in communion with their source – the Creator. It was a fallen human spirit, and it was this fallen spirit that they passed on to their descendants. Because of this, their descendants, generation after generation, strayed further and further from their original purpose, plagued by discord and estrangement from their Creator.

Yet, amidst the chaos, every now and then, there arose individuals who heard the faint whispers of their divine parent; like a receiver able to faintly pick the message from a radio far, far, away, as long as it was not moved around so much. They constantly sought to guide their kin back to their intended path, but their efforts were fleeting, tainted by their own fallen nature and the hard-heartedness of their kin. These we have called prophets and judges; and what they taught we have called the Law of God.

And so, the cycle continued, a perpetual struggle between humanity's innate yearning for unity and purpose – a call of their human spirit for its creator, the author of life; and the relentless pull of temptation and discord – a call of chaos masquerading as freedom. But deep within the heart of every soul, there remained a glimmer of hope – a longing to reconnect with their Creator and rediscover their true purpose in the tapestry of existence. And all along, unbeknownst to them, their Creator-parent too was working.

You see, amidst the turmoil of the disobedience of the man and woman, another consequence slowly unfurled that had been hidden from their immediate understanding; another consequence of their disobedience. As stewards of the physical realm; carriers of the creator-spirit or put more sentimentally, carriers of the image of the creator, the man and the woman had been endowed with authority by their Creator-parent, after all, everything had been created for them, and they were to be stewards in His name. Yet, with their expulsion from the presence of God and subsequent break of communion with the Author, this authority waned with each passing generation, leaving a void ripe for exploitation.

Unseen and unknown to mortal eyes, malevolent entities, cast out like shadows from the presence of God, had been gunning for such an opportunity. Away from the presence of the creator means away from power; so these spirits seized upon this opportunity. Their nefarious goal: to dismantle the sacred bond between Creator and creation, sowing discord and chaos in their wake and in the ensuing distraction, find a place for themselves. A sort of little finger move. As long as the human children were in disarray,

then these spirits could dwell in their realm, and command it as their own; the age old – divide and conquer.

These entities, cunning and relentless, orchestrated the downfall of humanity, whispering temptation into willing ears and ensnaring hearts with promises of false power. Having sparked the rupture between Creator and creation, they labored tirelessly to ensure it remained irreparable; because with the continued fall of humanity, they would have more dominion over the physical realm. They wielded the power and influence and like puppeteers, thwarting every attempt by prophets to lead humanity back to its divine path, our very own game of thrones.

Introducing with every generation more and more malevolent ideas and doctrines that could lead the human children to destroying themselves; they would whisper in the ear of one, tell your people that you are better than everyone else on the planet and you have a divine right to rule them; to another, men are meant to lead and women should follow; to another, there is no life after death, all you have is now, live however you want; and to another, only the rich enter the life after using the money they have accumulated; to one they tell, what you do doesn't matter, your existence is irrelevant; and to another, everything you do matters, you are the beginning and end of all. And for a time, it looked like they were winning.

Yet, unbeknownst to these malevolent forces, the Creator had not been sitting; the parent wanted the children back. So, He devised a plan; a plan so subtle, so meticulously crafted, that it completely eluded their grasp. Across centuries and millennia, amidst the ebb and flow of history, a clandestine path was forged—a path leading humanity back to its origins, back to the embrace of its Creator-parent.

With each passing moment, the Creator maneuvered with precision, orchestrating events in the shadows, beyond the ken of mortal and immortal comprehension. And when the time was ripe, when every element aligned with divine perfection, the Creator made His move—a move that altered the course of destiny itself; the Son came for His siblings.

Part IV

Sin and Salvation

On the Fallen Nature of Humanity

A fallen nature simply put refers to when a creature or creation stops working as it was intended to /created to; and in our case, when man stopped looking at the world in the same way as His creator-parent; thereby, changing his original directive/purpose. Man instead of seeking God's glory, started seeking his own; instead of building nature into a temple of God, sought to build it into his temple.

God who is secure in His identity is like the sun in our solar system; doing what is natural to Him, giving.

To put it in another way, God is aware that He is the source of all creation; everything comes from Him and everything will naturally flow back into Him; the beginning and the end of all. "...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Revelation 22:13

But we are told that the devil – Lucifer – changed his directive/purpose, when instead of keeping to the ecosystem of creation, living in it as all created beings should; that is, allowing everything to flow from the creator and source through all creation, and back to the creator and source; "...he said in his heart, I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13-14

He sought to be his own god; so that, the praise and glory which was due to the creator from all His creation, would flow to him instead of through him back to the source.

However nothing contrary can abide in the Creator; so he was expelled. "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!" Isaiah 14:12

And Jesus said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven..." Luke 10:18

It is following this that we have the scene in Genesis 3 of the devil appearing as a serpent and enticing Adam and Eve to disobey God. He even uses the same temptation he fell for, promising that they would be like God; and they unfortunately agreed; thus causing the breaking of the world.

It comes as no surprise then that we have a tendency to not only want to be the center of everything; to be the center of creation just like the devil did; but to believe we are the

center of creation. That everything is our due and we ought to use it as we see fit; we feel entitled to it all; although, we have no authority over it. This flows from our fallen nature. It is like when Adam and Eve agreed to do what the devil asked, they replaced their creator's inner directive with the devil's. And it is this tainted directive that comes down to us as their children.

To put it another way, the spirit – the element of God that lives in us, that gives us life, that connects us with the eternal, our DNA from God was meant to be a direct connection between us and our creator. Think of it as the second turning fork at the very same frequency as God; a receiver tuned perfectly to a radio's frequency. It is how we were meant to live in God's presence forever, seeking and doing His will perfectly in the physical world. However, when our first parents disobeyed God; they had to be cast out of the presence of God; because, nothing contrary can live in His presence. It would be un-existed. And that connection was broken, man was fallen. Our tuning fork was now tuned to other frequencies.

The body's primary directive was to survive in the physical world. This was warped, and need for food easily morphed into hoarding and greed; and all the other thousands of ways we have found to worry ourselves in a bid to make sure we never lack. And reproduction, which was meant to be another natural biological drive, got disordered into the thousands of vices we are struggling with today.

The soul/mind whose primary directive was seek knowledge and understanding was warped too; although, in its case more subtly, just as the consequences are more disastrous. So much of our knowledge base today seeks to encourage the belief that we are it; we are the measure of everything; a worshiping of the self as the eternal, the beginning and the end of all. So we seek attachments to things that seem to promise eternity – great wealth, fame, beauty and so on and so forth – only to lead to despair.

Therefore, the fall of man entails the complete fall of man; our body's primary directive has been perverted to seek to elongate and prolong our life at the expense of everyone and everything else – as Darwin famously summarized it as, "Survival of the fittest". Our soul/mind's primary directive has been perverted to seek to be the objective authority on all knowledge and understanding, disregarding the essential point that no human has ever been omniscient. And the spirit seeks eternity outside itself.

All the above lead to what in Christianity has been termed as: Sin, "...an offence against reason, truth, and right conscience, it is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbor

caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as, “an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law.”^{xiii}

The fallen nature of man is what ultimately causes sin and all its consequences. The original sin^{xiv} - as it is termed in the Catholic Church - weakened human nature and introduced a tendency to sin often referred to as concupiscence.^{xv}

And since it was our nature as human beings that was fallen, we need help; and this came in the form of a man, born in Nazareth. The only unique thing about Him being that He was a new man, identical to us in everything but one; it is recorded at His annunciation:

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

34 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. Luke 1:26-35

Did you catch it?

In verse 34, Mary asks the angel, how can this be, since I am a Virgin? The only way a human being is born, is through union between a man and a woman. And Mary is rightly perplexed since she hasn't had any. Little does she know that through her, God is about to make the move that He had been preparing since Genesis 3.

We already know that for a human being to be formed, there needs to be two cells, a sperm carrying 23 chromosomes and an ovum carrying 23 chromosomes; together they join to make a brand new cell of 46 chromosomes – the full human DNA, and a new human being is made. However the essential point I have been trying to make from the very beginning is that these two by themselves cannot generate life. Both are already dying, they have a life expectancy of 24 hours for the ovum and 7 days for the sperm. It stretches logic to believe that when they meet, they somehow rustle up energy to begin a whole new life cycle. If it is naturally possible here, then it should be possible for other

cells in the body to do so. It would be a neat trick biologically speaking; if cells in the body can do this, take for example, brain cells are dying out, two would edit themselves and join up and boom, a whole new cycle of cells is born. But it only happens in this circumstance, at the beginning of a new life. And this is because, the two cells joining together are the prerequisite/ the condition for the human spirit – God’s life spark in us – to ignite a new life.

It is this same spirit that was blown into the nostrils of both Adam and Eve at their creation; the same human spirit that has been passed on through generations as parents make children. At the fall of humanity, the human spirit lost its contact and communion with the Father; but, obviously not its action, which is to give life. So for generations, we have been able to reproduce and multiply, as directed by our creator, but unfortunately, we have also passed on the same human spirit that lost its contact and communion with God. It is why we could not by ourselves find the way back to God; because, two blind people cannot lead each other, both will fall in a ditch as we have for generations since our fall. Everything we have ever built, no matter how well intentioned has along the way become perverted and caused us harm.

You may wonder why didn’t God just end the line of Adam and start a new line with a new human spirit. I think the simple answer is, what would stop the new ones from doing the very same things Adam and Eve did? As long as man is created with free-will, he is given the capacity to wander away from God. This is why, the answer God invented was such that, once you are in, you are in for good. That answer was Jesus.

This is how Jesus poetically puts it, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5

So what makes Jesus unique? What makes His word different from any others? Why should we be attached to Him? And so on and so forth.

For the answer, we have to go back to the question Mary asked, How can this be, I am a virgin. She has not been with anyone, how can she then become pregnant. It would be impossible of course...

Unless...

And the angel responds, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you; and the power of the most High will overshadow you...” God, the creator and parent of all humanity has chosen that

moment to create a new Adam – a new man; a sighted man who can bring the rest back to God and their divine purpose.

Then all God would need is dust – or in this case a few hundred thousand atoms that make up a female ovum; already containing all the biological information required to form a human being. And to this a breath of the Holy Spirit and viola a brand new man emerges, new in every sense of the word – a body, soul and spirit in complete alignment with the creator. He resembled us as we were before Genesis 3; his human spirit in absolute unity with the Spirit of God.

It is no surprise then that all he ever desired to do was the will of the Father; because, he knew, as we also now know that, everything flows from the father and should therefore flow back to Him. Because the Father's will is perfect for His creation; since, only a creator knows the true purpose of His creation.

Now one point remains to be answered, for a new man to be created two things are necessary as we learn from Genesis 2, 7 “...then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” Dust formed into the body of a man, and a breath of life – or the Spirit of God breathed into the body to bring it to life.

We have already seen that at Jesus' conception, Mary was a virgin, so when the Holy Spirit came upon her, Jesus was formed from only her body, more accurately one of her cells. In other words, her body provided the cell that was formed into Jesus' body, and the Holy Spirit provided the life that animated that body; hence creating a new man; a new Adam, with a new human spirit untainted by the sin of the first Adam's disobedience.

I feel I need to mention that, the above does not mean that Mary provided 23 chromosomes and the Holy Spirit provided 23 Holy Chromosomes as one of my friends pointed out; since, a human being needs 46. Biology tells us that the egg already has all the data required to make a human being, so does the sperm. To use an analogy, in the making of a human being, both the woman and the man provide a complete human being in the 23 chromosomes that each provide. Upon fertilization, these two human beings are blended together and from that mixture comes out one new human being with a DNA thoroughly intermingled with excerpts from the chromosomes of both the mother and the father.

So in Jesus' case, Mary provided all the necessary DNA required to build a brand new man.

However a question remains, the body was provided by Mary in the form of a cell. And as we have already seen, when humanity fell, we fell completely, body, soul and spirit all forgot their original directives. That's why the body yearns for things that ultimately can destroy it; it is also prone to sickness and of course death; the soul chases after knowledge that does not benefit it and so on and so forth.

So, does this mean Mary provided a body for Jesus that was fallen, since she was fully human, with two human parents? And we very well know, God did not form a new body from dust... Or did He?

The answer to that took the Catholic Church a long time to come to terms with; although, it was believed in widely for centuries by Catholics, it was not formally defined by the authority of the church until the 19th century. It was simply put a very complex subject that required that amount of time to be fully understood. That is to say until Dec 8th 1854 that Pope Pius IX through the papal bull "Ineffabilis Deus" declared what Mary would confirm a few years later to Bernadette Soubirous a young French woman in a small unknown village of Lourdes, during one of the apparitions on March 25th 1858, on the feast of the Annunciation, where Mary identified herself to Bernadette in the local dialect, "Que soy era Immaculada Councepciou" (I am the Immaculate Conception).

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary affirms that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was preserved from original sin from the moment of her conception through a singular grace and privilege of God. This special grace was granted to her in view of her role as the mother of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, making her "full of grace" and uniquely holy. The dogma – meaning a doctrine that is never to be disputed – of the Immaculate Conception teaches that Mary was never touched by original sin, ensuring her purity and readiness to bear the Son of God. The Catholic Church celebrates this belief on December 8th as the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.^{xvi}

Therefore, Mary was shielded from the original sin, from the fallen human spirit; because, God was preparing her to provide the body of her son. If she was a fallen human like the rest of us, then, even Jesus would be, at least to an extent. In essence you can say, God did mold a new man from dust, just not in the way we thought He would. He molded him through keeping Mary free from the original sin; in the very state Eve was in, and like Eve, she too had a choice, either to be obedient to God's proposal or go after what she wants

for her life. But Mary answered, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her. Luke 1:38

It is for this reason that the church has always celebrated Mary, her obedient response to God’s plan at the annunciation leads to the fulfillment of God’s plan for salvation through Jesus; which stands in contrast with Eve’s disobedience. This has led to her being called Mother of the Church; and probably hints at Mary being the second half of the new parents; Jesus as the new Adam and Mary as the new Eve – although this is my opinion and not a doctrine of the church.

On Salvation

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” Luke 2:8-14

“At last, all-powerful Master, You give leave to Your servant to go in peace, according to Your promise. For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You prepared for all nations, the light to enlighten the Gentiles and give glory to Israel, Your people.” (Cantic of Simeon; Luke 2:29-32; text from the Divine Office)

The joy evident in both verses is brought on by the birth of Jesus; both from the heavenly host as they sang Gloria, and from Simeon reflects the climax of over two millennia of subtle moves made by God in a bid to win us back. In the struggle for our salvation, the birth of Jesus marked that we had now entered the ‘end game.’

This was it; the one move that God had been keeping; all the while preparing for it; the coming of Jesus, the Christ, to bring us home.

At the fall of Adam and Eve, we lost our communion with the Creator. And this led to many consequences chief among them, we lost our divine purpose, consequently our identity and our authority; all of which flow naturally from our purpose. Purpose begets identity; and identity bestows authority. Before anything is created, a need must arise, for example, the need to hold multiple pages of paper together necessitated the creation of a stapling machine. Everything about it is meant to help in stapling papers together; its

very nature is born out of the purpose of its creation. That means to understand a stapling machine, you need to understand its purpose and to understand its purpose you need to ask the maker/creator. Our purpose was to be in communion with God – to know Him; in so doing love Him; and ultimately serve Him. When we lost our purpose; we started looking for it in things, in what we did, in what we owned, in what the world said, and so on.

Periodically someone would come in and tell us who we really are, “...chosen by God, beloved, written in the palm of our creator, beautifully and fearfully made,” and so on and so forth. But more often than not we didn’t completely agree with these things or comprehend them; probably because, an essential part of us, our compass – that is the spirit – was no longer aligned with God but with something else, instead we choose to believe in our independency; this influencing our actions that often caused more harm than good to us and our neighbors. We were sheep without a shepherd.

But the shepherd was here, and when the time was right, he stepped into the public eye and “...from that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent – change your belief system - for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17

And for the next three years, that is all he did, he preached and taught everyone about the Kingdom of heaven; what are its values – love, compassion, and forgiveness. His central teachings revolved around the idea of loving God and loving one’s neighbor as oneself as this commandment encapsulated the essence of who we are; meant to be in communion with God and neighbor. Think about it, if God meant for us to experience His union as the Trinity, we could only get to it through our relationship with our neighbor. The more we learnt of truly being one with others, with no judgment and condemnation; the more like God we would become. And the more like Him we would become, the more of Him we would see in our neighbor, starting the circle again.

The more honestly you love a fellow human being; the easier it is to see why God loves them too; ask any good parent, and you will learn that dying for their children is not a cross too heavy to carry. Does it then surprise us that God chose to do exactly that?

The core of Jesus’ message was emphasizing the importance of empathy – feeling for the other, kindness and selflessness in human relationships – as this would lead to healthier and more authentic human relationships and secondly, proper relationship with God – see God as He truly is, the beginning and end of all, and thus worthy of our worship. This too helps us have healthier relationships with each other; because, how can I exploit the

other, if we are created the same. No wonder we try to make God from our race, since that means we are not the same as the other.

Jesus exemplified his message through his actions, showing mercy to sinners – in a culture that stoned them to death; healing the sick – in a society that ostracized them, and reaching out to the marginalized and oppressed. And always giving glory to God for all that He achieved and accomplished, “For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.” John 12:49-50

“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.” Matthew 7:28-29

He was teaching them what it meant to be children of God, and be part of the Kingdom of heaven, as we all originally belonged; and whenever one of them understood a particular topic well. He would exclaim, “You are not far from the Kingdom.” He used parables and analogies to teach his message; backing his message with wondrous signs and wonders – collectively called miracles – to show that the information he was giving was not of human origin. After all nothing in the physical realm can explain miracles, it is why scientists have had such a hard time with them.

The miracles were not meant to show his power but certify that the message he was preaching was not of human origin. It belonged to someone greater, the father of creation, the only one capable of making changes in his creation. “So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”” John 5:19

However, an important issue remained. You see, the problem that was affecting man was not simply a knowledge problem. It wasn't that we are ignorant of what to do. It goes deeper than that, way deeper. As Paul, an apostle of Jesus stated it so candidly, “So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in myself another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in me. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Romans 7:21-24

Our problem wasn't just ignorance; but more importantly, the fallen-ness of human nature. Concupiscence as the theologians call it. And this could not be remedied simply by information; but, an overhaul of the entire human system – body, soul and spirit. Jesus called it by another name – to be born again. Since we were already alive, it meant we would first die, then be born again; so that we would then get an opportunity to receive everything new – a new body, a new soul, and most importantly a new spirit; to replace the broken human spirit.

“Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:1-3

With a new spirit, to replace the old, lost and broken Adamic human spirit that we all have been sharing; it would be easy to educate our soul/mind on the right information and knowledge on being children on God and part of the kingdom; and it would also be easy to prevail upon our wayward bodies and bring them into alignment with the original directive. The fallen man would be born again into a new creation, similar to Adam and Eve before the fall. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

However another problem may arise, what would stop that age-old nemesis of man from coming back in a new form and lead us astray again. I mean he did it before; why not do it again?

So it needed that this rebirth is done in such a way that it is permanent, forever, and eternal. So that once the fallen man receives this new update, then he/she is forever out of reach of the old enemy. This would require a spirit that has such qualities; because, a human spirit can only imbue what is characteristic for human. A human spirit can be immortal; that is, unable to die, like angels and such, but definitely not eternal. And unfortunately, immortal spirits can be lead astray too. The devil as we saw earlier was one such spirit, and he fell, he fell hard. It would definitely need an eternal spirit, so that when human beings received this new spirit, then they too would possess eternal life; impossible to be reached by any other malevolent spirit seeking to lead us astray. As it so happens, there is such a spirit, God is such a spirit and it is He who wants to achieve this momentous action. Thus it fell on the parent to save the children.

Story time – The Triune Assembly

The three persons of the Trinity are gathered around a table, their divine presence casting a soft glow around them. The weighty topic hung in the air as they discussed the fate of their wayward children.

"We can no longer simply call to them," the first person of the Trinity remarked, his voice filled with sorrow. "Their connection to us has been broken, and by their choice no less." "Do you think they will ever understand why we cast them from our presence?" asked the third person.

"They will" answered the second, "although, it will require a lot of explaining on our part." He added, which brought a smile on the faces of the other two, "they can be very intractable." agreed the 1st person.

"I wonder whose fault that is." added the 3rd person, turning to look at the first person significantly.

"Don't look at me like that, it is probably your fault as well." They continued looking at each other as if memorizing the moment, and slowly the light moment passed.

The second person spoke solemnly, "They've been deceived." "He will get his due." completed the first person, "and now they are finding their identity and purpose in the very things they were meant to give meaning," the first person continued, his voice tinged with sorrow.

Throughout the ages, they had called out to their children; and every now and then someone would hear, although very faintly, and try to bring them back. It sometimes worked, but only for a time. But their efforts were often thwarted by their enemy, who sought to keep them lost and unaware of their true potential; because, if they ever truly found out who they were, they would take over their dominion in a minute.

"He has been relentless in keeping them." intoned the first person, "that he has, hasn't he?" answered the second, another smile blooming on his face, this one full of mischief, "you two are intractable" finished the 3rd person looking at the two fondly.

"You just wanted to use that word, we know." answered the 1st person and the 2nd person nodded solemnly in agreement, as he added, "we are omniscient, so we know these things."

"Well, the way to bring them back," the third person broached, "is at hand. They are as prepared as they will ever be. It is time." The other two nodded in agreement, and the 1st person declared, "We are bringing them home. We are re-creating them with a new body, a new soul, and a new spirit; Our spirit, this time, so we never lose them again. Let us fully make them ours."

The 2nd and 3rd persons nodded in agreement. It had always been the plan after all.

"Let us run through it again" requested the 3rd person.

"They need to be born-again into their original destiny, as part of our family. Thus they will need a new body, a new soul and a new spirit; since, what they currently have are all tainted. The disobedience of their first parents caused everything to be tainted. This is why no matter how much they want to do good, it is the evil they end up doing; they lost their original state of grace. This is why everything must be re-born.

The body will be the easiest since it has no will of its own. But their bodies cannot actually die, as that would mean the end of their existence on earth; but, for them to be truly re-born then the body – their fallen bodies - needs to die. So, our chosen messenger will die in their stead; so that, all who believe in him and are baptized, will have died with him and risen with him.

As for the new soul, it will require that they be re-educated on who they are; and discouraged from overly relying on their own intelligence as it is knowledge of a fallen world. It cannot bring them back to us, it cannot save them.

I am glad that we are already half way done with this. The many prophets, judges and kings we sent to them have imparted on them knowledge of the eternal kingdom. It is not complete but nearly there. It just needs someone to go and put everything into perspective for them, be the cornerstone, the foundation for all the knowledge they have received; bring it all into completion.

As for the spirit, this is the tricky bit." The other two nodded.

"Their human spirit – the source of their spark of life is broken – it is aligned with the malevolent powers of the enemy and they don't even know it. It is no surprise that all they touch tends towards destruction. That is all the enemy knows. No good can survive apart from us, he never could believe that, and now all he causes is destruction and death.

Their spirit was humanity's connection to us, thus it cannot die like the body and be reborn; nor be re-educated like the soul. It has to be re-aligned by the children themselves; and this is the hardest part, they have to let-go of all they believe and trust in our messenger. It has to be just like it happened in Genesis; just as they believed in the words of the old-enemy in faith, and so, broke the covenant, so must they believe in the word of the messenger in faith and thus mend the broken covenant. This is going to be the hardest test for them; because, they have been trained to believe in their own omnipotence, their own benevolence, their own omniscience; yet, none of that really exists. It is all a lie. All who believe anything contrary to what is; that is who we are, cannot exist with us. This will be their greatest and hardest test, all we can do is prepare them.

Secondly and even more importantly, we have to make sure that, once the children come back, they will never be lost again. We will need to bring them into the family officially, ending their pilgrimage; elevating them even higher than Adam and Eve their first parents. It is for this reason that we are here."

"To ensure we never lose them again, one of us must go to them," the 1st person declared, "it is the only way." "Indeed," confirmed the 3rd person, "the only way to keep them from harm forever; the only way to make certain of that is to make them like us, eternal – possessing our very life. And only one of us can do that."

"I will go," the second person volunteered. "I will become like them, a son of man. I will teach them, as we were meant to before they disowned us, and help them understand all that we have done was for their good. And when the time comes, I will give them myself; my body will be killed to pay for their debt of sin and risen to become their body, my soul to be their will, and my spirit to enliven them."

The other two nodded solemnly in agreement as the 2nd person continued,

"I will tell them, the only way to be saved is through me.

I will tell them that by themselves, they cannot come back into communion with us; because, none of them knows the way. Only I, who has come from You, know the way.

I will tell them that I am the way, I am the truth and I am the life. No one can come to Us except through me.

I will tell them this can only be achieved by believing in me and believing in my word – all that I have taught them; because, whosoever believes in me, also believes in You.

I will tell them, to believe in me is to have eternal life; the one thing Adam and Eve failed to do; even though he or she die, yet shall live. And when the time comes I will rise them up. By believing in me, they heal the broken covenant; it was broken by man choosing to be independent of us, yet such a thing is not possible. And as such, it is healed by man trusting in me, having faith in me.

I will tell them that all who believe must be baptized, as an outward sign to signify that they have been re-born; that by their free-will they have chosen to let go of their old life. Their body died as it entered the water, and what came out of the water was my body – which has already died for their sin and is now sinless.

Their soul died when they entered the water, and what came out was my soul – which is concerned only with Your will; and their spirit, when they entered the water has been replaced by mine, they now possess the very life of God in themselves; they have joined God's family as part of me and are now part of Us. I will die so that they receive this gift and live.

I will make them understand that the only way they can come back into communion with us, is enrobed in me. They will sit at this table not on their own right; but, as part of me. It is the only way they can be with Us. Of course, that is until, the end of the age and everything is born anew.”

“Yes, when this age is done, You will reveal them in their glory, and our work will be done.”^{xvii}

The 1st person spoke solemnly "We will be with you every step of the way, guiding your every step until the very end, even in the valley of the shadow of death, I will be with you. And when you are lifted up, you will draw all of them to yourself, and thus be their salvation."

And so, the divine plan was concluded and so, the divine plan would unfold; God would become man, setting in motion the ultimate act of redemption and love.

“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you...” Luke 1:26-28

The End

That marks the end of this speculative journey. I have attempted from the very beginning to show that these things make sense; that things of God aren't just mysterious, and to be left alone.

That we are three in one, just like our Triune Creator.

That the life-giving part of us, the spirit, is from God and is what marks us as His.

That at the fall of man, this spirit, that was meant to be the source of life for Adam and his children forever, misaligned and we thus connected ourselves to the enemy of God.

That this caused the total collapse of the human being and consequently caused our tendency to sin.

That God from then on has sought to bring us back; but, we have resisted it sometimes because it went against our new found 'freedom', which is really a path to chaos.

That the devil has unceasingly encouraged this thought; because, it is playing exactly into his plan of keeping us separated and thus having us worship him – the father of chaos and lies.

That God's ultimate plan for our salvation was revealed in Jesus (God is with us) as he was born to lead us out of darkness; by teaching us the way to God – the good news of our salvation; and then dying for us, so that the debt of sin is paid; thus, we are brought back into communion, sheltered under his wing.

In the next part, we shall see, what does it mean for us that Jesus came and died; and that we are now – in Paul's words – a new creation; the mystical body of Christ.

Part V

The Kingdom of God

“We can identify three dimensions in the Church Fathers’ interpretation of the Kingdom of God.

The first dimension is the Christological one. Origen, basing himself on a reading of Jesus’ words, called Jesus the ‘autobasileia,’ that is, the Kingdom in person. Jesus himself is the Kingdom; the Kingdom is not a thing, it is not a geographical dominion like worldly kingdoms. It is a person; it is he. On this interpretation, the term “Kingdom of God” is itself a veiled Christology. By the way in which he speaks of the Kingdom of God, Jesus leads men to realize the overwhelming fact that in him God himself is present among them, that he is God’s presence.

There is a second way of looking at the significance of the “Kingdom of God,” which we could call the idealistic or mystical interpretation. It sees man’s interiority as the essential location of the Kingdom of God. This approach to understanding the Kingdom of God was also inaugurated by Origen. In his treatise *On Prayer*, he says that “those who pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God pray without any doubt for the Kingdom of God that they contain in themselves, and they pray that this Kingdom might bear fruit and attain its fullness. For in every holy man it is God who reigns [exercises dominion, is the Kingdom of God].... So if we want God to reign in us [his Kingdom to be in us], then sin must not be allowed in any way to reign in our mortal body (Rom 6:12).... Then let God stroll at leisure in us as in a spiritual paradise (Gen 3:8) and rule in us alone with his Christ” (*Patrologia Graeca* 11, pp. 495f.). The basic idea is clear: The “Kingdom of God” is not to be found on any map. It is not a kingdom after the fashion of worldly kingdoms; it is located in man’s inner being. It grows and radiates outward from that inner space.

The third dimension of the interpretation of the Kingdom of God we could call the ecclesiastical: the Kingdom of God and the Church are related in different ways and brought into more or less close proximity.”^{xviii}

Drawing from the passage above by Pope Benedict XVI, I feel like the mission of God for earth can be outlined in three stages; each building on the one before. First, the message of the Kingdom had to be delivered in its fullness; so, Christ came.

Second, God had to make sure that the message spreads far and wide, to save all humanity; the mission required our active participation and on-going efforts to propagate it; so, Christ elected disciples and apostles to take over after Him.

Thirdly, it needed to be organized, and that led to the formation of the church; through whom the Holy Spirit would continue the work keeping us on one page with God.

Let us see each in some detail:

JESUS the Nazarene, the CHRIST

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.” Hebrews 1:1-2

The kingdom of God is Jesus Christ. He is the fullest manifestation of the will of God in the physical world. His only desire was to fulfill the will of His father; and it was this that made him victorious. He never once claimed anything for himself; everything he shared was from the father and for the father; it was the father's glory that he worked for and the father's glory he sought. In his world, God the father held only one place, the beginning and end of everything; in Him we live, and move, and have our being; and thus He need be glorified as such.

It was this mindset that Jesus, through his words and more through his actions taught. He told his followers, the Kingdom of God is here. In other words saying, if you want to know about God's kingdom, look to me, listen to my words and understand them.

In essence Jesus was teaching us a paradigm shift, telling us:

“Everything comes from God, He created it all. In addition, all good things flow from Him; therefore, we should look to him to learn how we can be good. I am God's truest reflection on earth, no one else will ever show you the mind of God as I do; because, only I have come from Him. Listen to me and believe me, and I will show you the way to the Eternal Kingdom, allow me to teach you, and my father and I will come and dwell in you.

The prophets taught you many things about the Kingdom of God; I am not here to remove or change what they taught, but to fulfill it. For example, Moses told you that you shall not kill; but I tell you, if you are angry with your brother or sister, you have killed; he (Moses) told you, you shall not commit adultery; but I tell you, if you look at another woman or man lustfully - simply as an object for sex - you have already committed adultery.

It is for this reason that I came; because, without me, you would never understand how dire your situation is; without me, you would all die eternally. But I have come that you may have life and have it in the fullest.

Take for example, you have many things you worry about, you worry about food and clothing, what to eat and drink, how to remain relevant and influential; but I tell you, you shouldn't; because, God who created you, knows your needs. You shouldn't even worry about tomorrow, sufficient for the day are its own troubles. So, instead of spending all your days worrying about these things, and those things; spend your time trying to understand what I am telling you, what the prophets told you, what is required of you by God; in short, spend your time learning how to be a citizen of the Kingdom of God and the rest will fall in line."

This is not a teaching that we can easily understand or even carry out; and that is because it isn't the type we are used to. Christ was shifting the paradigm from us being the center of the universe, to God being the center. It is no surprise that he teaches, seek first the kingdom of God, and the rest will fall in line.

Christ's gospel was not meant to teach us how to be people of the world; but to be people of heaven living in the world. Each time I think on this I am reminded of the attitude of Prince Akeem in *Coming to America*; to be a Prince in the Kingdom of God, but willing to clean floors here and now; without requiring that everyone know that I am a Prince cleaning windows. That requires such humility like this world has never seen.

Christ's message is as radical today as it was then. His message was not simply love each other, as if we needed someone to tell us that; no, his message was about a love that is sacrificial; a love that is so deep that it prompts a willingness to let go of your life for the other, a direct contradiction of most of what the world teaches us – that we not the other are the center of the world, that it is we who are the fittest and thus must survive. Another way of trying to make us see how God sees.

The philosophy of this world in summary is something along the lines, we must do everything to preserve our life; because, we have only one life, and it behooves us to spend it sparingly. It is in this life that we can make a difference in the lives of others. We are the only ones who can make a difference in such situations, so we should stay alive at whatever cost, in order to be useful in such situations. The essence being, it is all about me, whatever works for me is good; whatever doesn't is bad.

Self-preservation seems to be the underlying cause for so much of the harm we see in the world. There are so many good people who keep quiet in the face of evil; not because they

don't see it, but because, they want to keep their lives safe. The story of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador comes to mind, who was assassinated because of his advocacy for social justice and human rights; and criticism of the government's repression and violence against the poor. His outspokenness prompted many others to speak out, which led to even more death. Were their deaths necessary? Is there another way this can be done? I am afraid there are no simple answers to this.

What we do know is that while Christ, the truest representation of the Kingdom of God, was on earth, he too was persecuted even unto death, death on the cross. And through his death, he was victorious over the world. He hoped in God to the very end of his life, and died in the most shameful way possible, and God repaid that hope by raising him from the dead and giving him a name that is above all other names.

And when he was going he told us, his followers, "...I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33. All this seems to be pointing to a fact that the Kingdom of God that he was preaching is not at all what we are used to and if we understood it, we would have peace in the world. Among the many things that He told his disciples, one of the hard ones is, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" Matthew 16:25-26. Further emphasizing that the basic instinct we learn in the world goes contrary to the Kingdom. Whereas the world teaches survival of the fittest; the Kingdom teaches, there is no greater love than for one to lay down his life for his friends.

His coming herald the coming of the Kingdom of God to man, and through his work, he introduced it, taught about it and attracted new members to join in its mission. These new members we called disciples from the Latin word "discipulus" which means "learner/student" or "follower"; so these were students of the Kingdom/followers of Jesus, and among them Jesus elected 12, whom he called apostles, from the Greek word "apostolos," which means "one who is sent out" or "messenger." It was to these that he left the core responsibility of spreading the kingdom far and wide.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

The Believer(s)

After the creation of Adam and Eve, God commanded them to be fruitful, multiply and fill the world. It was through their children and their children's children that the world would be filled with little Adamites and Evites; grandchildren and great-grandchildren of God, all carrying the spirit of God, working in the world in communion with God, spreading the ever-growing family and dominion of God ever further; maybe, to the very stars themselves.

Imagine this, these men and women were meant to be the perfect stewards of God the creator. They would look at the world exactly as God, but impacting it as a human being. They would co-create with God, but never with a sense of exploitation we see today; a civilization born out of creativity without exploitation of resources. What a sight that would be.

Unfortunately, the plan ran into some difficulties. The first parents were tempted away from communion with God. The rest of the plan continued without hiccup except that one pivotal point; they were no longer in communion with the author of the plan and everything else. The family still grew as planned but now in a haphazard and disorderly manner; fighting amongst themselves more often than working together; looking for every reason to not remain in communion with each other. This was the way of life. But all along, the human race awaited a messiah, someone who would save them, primarily from our own self-centeredness.

And when the time was right, a boy was born. He was the long-awaited Messiah. He came and taught the people of his area, all that he had been sent to say. He told them of the kingdom of God, of which they could be part; they once had been, but they rebelled against God, and were expelled. All those who accepted his words, became his disciples. He taught them all he knew and promised them a helper, who would come and be with them, explaining to them all that they needed to understand. The receiving of the helper was/is the sign that they have joined God's family and are now working to spread the Kingdom in their own little ways. It was a sign that they have re-joined the original plan.

And to mark that momentous occasion, of a man/woman being re-born into the family of God, they would be baptized.

Allow me a little digression here, I feel I should share a bit more on this wonderful ceremony, baptism.

Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, the fourth born of the twelve children of Jacob; the first three lost their privilege and status due to some sins they committed; Reuben lost his birthright as the first born due to inappropriate behavior with Bilhah – one of his father's concubines; Simeon and Levi due to their violent actions against the people of Shechem; leaving Judah as the next in line; prompting Jacob to bless him saying, "...The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples..." Genesis 49:10. I encourage you to read the whole chapter.

Thus Judah was promised the leadership of the family; and it comes as no surprise that 1000 years later, a young man from the tribe of Judah called David is anointed king, and God promises him that his son will be the Eternal King, "...When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." 2 Samuel 7:12-13

And another 1000 years later, approximately, Jesus is born.

The point I am making is that Jesus had the right to be King of Israel, it wasn't some title imparted on him because he was doing miracles or because he was very eloquent. It was his birthright. He was, "Jesus the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,... the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed,... the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God." Luke 3:31-38

However, in order for him (Jesus) to fulfill his mission, it required him to not only be a King – that is lead his people to righteousness; but also as we already saw, we needed more than just knowledge for our redemption; there was someone whose life we would need, someone whose blood would cover us in righteousness; before we could come into God's presence. Atonement for sin according to the Law of Israel required blood, "...For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life." Leviticus 17:11. You see we could no longer by our own merit enter into God's presence; since we have all done terrible things to each other and to God; so, the only way we could enter God's presence is covered by the pure life of an animal that we sacrifice.

Since, he was going to have to offer a sacrifice, as required by the Law to cover us in righteousness in order for us to enter God's presence; Jesus also needed to be a priest. The problem is, priests also come from a specific tribe, the tribe of Levi, and from a specific

family, as we see here, God directing Moses on how to do it, “...Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” Leviticus 1:5

So, how did Jesus get around this particular predicament? Well as it so happens, Jesus had a cousin brother, who as it so happens, came from that very lineage. John the Baptist, was the Son of Zechariah – a priest in the temple of Jerusalem, and Elizabeth a cousin of Mary the Mother of Jesus. And instead of working in the temple as his father, John went out into the wild, “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:1-2 And part of his ministry included, baptizing people as a sign of their repentance.

We are told, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:13-17

According to Matthew, after this, Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and came back to start officially his public ministry. Matthew tells us that when Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been arrested, “From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17 and according to John, “Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. John 4:1-3

The point I am driving at is, it seems to me that Jesus allowed himself to be baptized because it was a way to appropriate a faculty he didn’t possess before. And this could be done by John bequeathing upon Jesus his ministry, and consequently, his authority as a priest in Israel. This is why Jesus’ disciples, are recorded as doing what John used to do – that is baptize, and Jesus preaching what John used to preach – the message of the Kingdom. In my humble opinion, the baptism was the way for Jesus to receive John’s Ministry; Jesus was baptized into John’s Ministry as a Priest of Israel.

No wonder, when Christ had finished his own Ministry on earth as he was preparing to go back home; he told his disciples to wait for the helper, the Holy Spirit. And as had been prophesied by John, “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with

the Holy Spirit and fire.” Matthew 3:11. On Pentecost – 50 days after his resurrection from the dead – they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, signified as tongues of fire; thus receiving the three offices of Jesus, King – since he was from the tribe of Judah; Priest – the office he received from John the Baptist, and prophet – a calling for any Jewish man. In other words, the disciples were baptized into Jesus’ ministry, and they were sent to do this to the whole world.

In the very same way, we too are baptized in water by our elders; in the faith we are baptized into Christ’s ministry and mission, and we receive the Holy Spirit and thus also receive the three offices of Jesus, priests, prophets and kings. This is why Paul refers to us as the body of Christ, as the body is the physical manifestation of the Will, to act in the physical world. We are baptized Kings in the Kingdom of God, under one King; priests under the one Holy and Eternal high priest; and prophets, mouthpieces of the one God.

Through baptism, we receive the very spirit of Christ and thus we are endowed not just spiritually; but also, legally as His representatives on earth. The believer now working on behalf of Jesus – never on his own behalf; but on behalf of the one whose robe he/she is putting on – can now go out into the world and spread the Kingdom of God, as part of God’s family as originally planned.

This idea is not novel, in Ex. 32, 7 God says something that doesn’t seem to make any sense, “And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves...”” Now why would God call the Israelites, Moses’ people? We all very well know, it is God who brought them out of the land of Egypt. It may seem so, until you read 1 Cor. 10, 2 which says, “...and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea...” meaning the Israelites were baptized into Moses, this is why God referred to them as Moses’ people; he was their mediator with God. In the same way, we are baptized into Jesus and we are Christians; and Jesus is our mediator with God. But Jesus is God. Well now you see how we were fast-tracked into the Royal family.

We pray, may your kingdom come, into our hearts to make us more and more like Jesus; to our families and to our friends and society through our presence; and through our activities. The baptized believer is Jesus representative on earth, endowed with all the power and authority of Jesus to spread God’s Kingdom; the foot soldiers of the message of grace.

By ourselves we have no legal right to this world; since, Adam and Eve lost it, when they broke covenant with God, the creator of everything. But as believers in Jesus Christ;

dressed in his authority through baptism, we have the full might and authority of the Kingdom of God to back us.

And Jesus said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you – because it is not about you - but rejoice that your names are written in heaven – it’s about God’s grace to you.” Luke 10:18-20

This goes without mentioning that this authority is not given simply because, you have been immersed in water. It flows from the very first step; that is, being a believer in Jesus; a true definition of a disciple - to follow in order to become like. Which entails accepting all He has taught and striving to live it; this essentially refers to catechesis, which comes from the Greek verb, “Katecheo,” which means “to teach orally,” “to instruct,” or “to inform.” This requires teachers and doctrine, and an authority to ensure the doctrine and teachers remain on topic, and not lead the believers astray. Thus we have the church.

The CHURCH

Story Time:

Kizito Omutto's First Day

He gently kicked him and said, "Eh – eh, Kizito kimala; it is enough." Kizito still screaming opened his eyes and realized that indeed he was actually lying on bare-ground as he had been for the last 5 minutes, screaming his lungs out; not in the fire anymore.

He visibly stopped himself from continuing with the racket and slowly stood up, dusting himself, looking around in obvious relief. He then surreptitiously stepped closer to his older companion and asked in a loud whisper, "Kojja, twafudde; are we dead?"

The older man looked down at him bemusedly and answered, "Era twafudde; oh yes, we are very very dead."

"Eh, eh, eh Kojja, omuliiro gwokya; that fire could burn something fierce." The young man answered masking a shudder, still looking around at the new environment with a frown growing on his face.

And the uncle visibly stifled himself from bursting out in laughter by raising hands to his mouth and masking it as a bow to Jesus and Peter who had been all along standing there waiting for the two sojourners to acknowledge them.

Kizito still obviously disoriented; still looking around in disbelief, asked "Naye Kojja, mu mazima, lino lye Ggulu; is this indeed Heaven?"

The older companion at a loss on what to do in such a situation; whether to continue bowing to the King and his Vicar or answer the concerns of his young companion, in the end chose a middle way; so, he took the head of Kizito without facing away and faced him towards the awaiting dignitaries, while answering him softly, "Era lino lye ggulu, tolaba Yezu; Jesus is right there!"

That however did not stop the youngster from asking wryly, "Kati, Etooke likolaki eno mu mazima; hm, what is this matooke doing here?"

To be continued...

“Nec quicquam tamen proficit exquisitior quaeque crudelitas vestra; inlecebra est magis sectae. Plures efficimur quotiens metimur a vobis; semen est sanguis Christianorum.” (Yet your cruelty, no matter how refined, achieves nothing; it is rather a temptation to us. We become more numerous every time you mow us down; the blood of Christians (Martyrs) is seed.)^{xix} – Tertullian (145 – 220 AD)

At the creation of Man and Woman, God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27

But something happened, and somehow these first parents lost their original connection to God. They could no longer be as they had been created to be; this caused all sorts of problems, including and not limited to death, violence, divisions and so on and so forth.

Jesus was born to save us and re-unite us with God and our primordial purpose. To do so he first of all needed to re-educate us building on all that the prophets had taught, “And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:25-27

But that in itself was not enough; because, we do all sorts of terrible things to each other, and God would not be just if He just looked aside and allowed us to enter eternity. The consequences of Sin is death; and someone has to pay that bill. If we were to pay it ourselves, we would be eternally separated from God, and He didn’t want that. So he devised a way, He (God) would pay the bill, so that we can then join Him for eternity. Thus Christ had to die on the cross as a recompense for our sins.

After His resurrection, the first person he meets is Mary Magdalene, one of his disciples and verily informs her, I am going to my father and your father, my God and your God. In essence telling her, the debt has been paid, now you can come home. He later on meets the rest of his disciples and tells them the same thing; I am alive, your debt is paid forever. If my death had not been sufficient I would still be in hades; but I am here. So rejoice, I have conquered the world.

All can be partakers in this gift/grace. All they have to do is believe in me and do what I taught you. I will send you a helper who will teach you all that you need. And I will be with you until the end of days.

His mission on earth complete, he ascended to his home, to prepare a place for all his people; all who will believe in Him. But before going, he had to make sure that the message never gets lost. He knew us well, we are very good at forgetting our roots. So He instituted some measures:

One, he organized his disciples into a system; out of all of his disciples he chose 12 whom he would teach more, “In those days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.” Luke 6:12-16

And in addition, he also chose three of the twelve to be his inner circle. To these he revealed inexplicable mysteries of the Kingdom. Their work would be to tell the others when the time was right, “And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light...and as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”” Matthew 17:1-9

Of the 12 he chose his vicar – whom he personally elected; but at the prompting of God, to be the head of his mission “...and Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:17-19

To all these and the thousands upon thousands more that will join them, he gave the mission of going into the world and telling of what God had done in their sight, “...and he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be

condemned...” Mark 16:15-16. And at Pentecost, His church was born, that up to today is fulfilling this directive.

Two, he instituted a rite – a specific, formal and sacred act/ceremony - that would be the cornerstone for his followers; of the things they may forget this was not one of them. It was simply too important.

“And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer...and he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. Luke 22:15-20

This would always remind them/us that we have been paid for; the debt is paid. What is left is our choice to follow or not to follow Him into the Kingdom.

I have since my childhood had a devotion to the Eucharist, so it is no surprise to me that of the seven sacraments, it is one that I have spent quite a bit of time thinking on. Here are my thoughts on the subject:

The Eucharist represents the complete fulfillment of God's divine plan. Think on this, Jesus could have come, lived, died, risen, and ascended into heaven as originally planned. But this sequence of events alone would not have had a direct impact on us. We are distinct individuals; thus, my neighbor's actions in the spiritual sense cannot have any impact on me unless I allow them to. I may be the holiest person that ever lived; but, I cannot pass on that holiness to someone else, simply by being in the same place with them, or living in the same time era with them. There needed to be a way to marry us to Jesus, thus allowing us to partake in his act of salvation.

We learn from the Old Testament that this was the way the Jews sacrificed an animal, so that they can be covered in its purity thus be worthy of entering God's presence: “If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting...” Leviticus 1:3-5. They laid their hands upon it, to pass on their sin to it and receive the animal's purity. Then the animal's flesh was burnt up completely, to signify that their sins have been paid for; at least for a time.

However, another prescription was made, “...But the holy things that are due from you, and your vow offerings, you shall take, and you shall go to the place that the LORD will choose, and offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God. The blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, but the flesh you may eat.” Deuteronomy 12:26-27. Here we don’t hear of a laying on of hands; but, eating of the flesh of the sacrifice.

I believe in both ways, the aim was to link the sacrifice with the one offering it; they ate the meat of the sacrifice or laid hands on it, to be physically joined with the animal; and so, be spiritually linked. We are of the physical realm, thus all we do must start from the physical and ascend into the spiritual. It is why we baptize with water when words could suffice; or exchange rings and /or makes vows at the altar when promises made in secret would suffice. If they had only killed the animal and poured its blood without sharing in it somehow, then how would that differ from any common hunting?

On Holy Thursday, Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist, in which we partake of the body of Christ, thereby linking ourselves with Him—achieving communion with God. Whenever we eat of the body and drink the blood in his remembrance, we bring into the present the events that occurred 2,000 years ago.

In that moment, we are with the disciples at the Last Supper. Our Lord is about to be the sacrifice – like a sheep led to slaughter; allow himself to be sacrificed – like a son knowing his duty; and sacrifice himself – as the high priest of the Kingdom of God; to purchase our eternal redemption. We eat the body and drink His blood actually and thus spiritually bind ourselves to Him in a profoundly beautiful and inexplicable way; participating in the mystery of the Body of Christ, with Christ as the head and we as members of this body.

In eating His body and drinking His blood, we say yes to the union; and in so doing, bind ourselves to the consequences of the cross – our salvation. It is saying yes to the proposal, “Do you allow me to die for you?” “...Do you want to go away as well?...” John 6:66-67

The Eucharist is brought to life by the action of Christ dying on the cross, and the whole activity of salvation is brought to life by God raising Him from the dead, as a sign that indeed it is accomplished. The sacrifice was sufficient.

It reminds me of that age old saying, you become what you eat.

Over the centuries, these sacraments have changed but never losing their identity; baptism required catechesis, and catechesis required doctrine that was cohesive. This saw to the birth of teachers, who would be in the footsteps of the apostles; thus, the Order of Episcopate (Bishop) was born – the Catechists of the church – who together make up the magisterium, the teaching council of the church; but they needed help, thus we had the Order of Presbyterate (Priest) - co-workers of the bishop; and the Order of Deaconate (Deacon) – helpers of the bishops and priests. All these were men, keeping with the tradition set by Jesus; but since, he never specifically commanded it, the church is discussing whether to change it or not; we leave that to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Upon baptism and confirmation, men and women in the church then spend the rest of their lives discerning what God called them to; why were they created? What is their mission on earth? What is their purpose? This is a life long journey with major diversions on the way. At a certain age, they find out whether they are called to marriage or celibate life. Marriage entails finding a partner and starting a family on the principals taught by Jesus and the church.

Celibate life seems to have as many paths as there are people these days, with some joining ordained life or religious life – to serve in the church as officials; and others choosing to remain lay; each led as they feel by the Holy Spirit, whom we all receive at baptism. The Christian life is not perfect; sometimes we fall in our goal to be like Jesus, to love like He did, sacrifice and give like He did. Whenever that happens, we ask for repentance; and when we are sick and fear that it is time for us to go back home, yet we are not ready; we ask for anointing that returns us to our baptismal grace.

The above is more or less a summary of the seven sacraments of the church; they are usually divided into three main categories:

1. Sacraments of Initiation:

- Baptism: The first sacrament of initiation, which cleanses a person of original sin and initiates them into the Christian community.
- Confirmation: This sacrament strengthens the grace received at Baptism and seals the individual with the Holy Spirit.
- Eucharist: Also known as Holy Communion, this sacrament is the reception of Christ's Body and Blood, nourishing the soul and uniting the individual more closely with Christ and the Church.

2. Sacraments of Healing:

- Reconciliation (Penance or Confession): This sacrament provides forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism and reconciles the individual with God and the Church.
- Anointing of the Sick: This sacrament offers spiritual and sometimes physical healing, comfort, and strength to those who are seriously ill or near death.

3. Sacraments of Service (Sacraments at the Service of Communion):

- Holy Orders: This sacrament ordains a man to the diaconate, priesthood, or episcopacy, enabling him to serve the Church through the ministry of the Word and sacraments.
- Matrimony (Marriage): This sacrament unites a man and woman in a lifelong covenant of love and service, reflecting the union of Christ and the Church, and is directed towards the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children.^{xx}

The Church, as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is a profound mystery, simultaneously visible and spiritual. United in Christ, it embodies both a hierarchical structure and the mystical body of Christ. Within this framework, the Church functions as both a society and a community of believers, guided by Christ through the Pope and the bishops. Its identity is defined by four essential characteristics: oneness, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. These attributes, expressed in the Nicene Creed, underline the Church's unity, sanctity, universality, and continuity with the apostolic tradition. As a communion of saints, the Church extends beyond earthly boundaries, encompassing all believers, living and deceased, who are united in Christ through the sacraments. Furthermore, the Church, as the Body of Christ, participates in his mission, embodying his priestly, prophetic, and kingly roles, and continuing his salvific work in the world.^{xxi}

However, regardless of your chosen calling or my chosen path in life, we are all expected to work in the vineyard of the Lord; it is the mission of the church and the Kingdom at large: to bring this earth/physical realm to dominion under the leadership of Christ the Eternal King; to extend His rule of hope, faith and love. This maybe through great works of renown like we see in people like St. Therese of Calcutta, and St. Ignatius of Loyola and other great men and women of God, who shook the earth with their mighty deeds; or silently like we see in the parents of St. Padre Pio, or in the life of St. Therese of Lisieux, who live and die without anyone knowing them, but still profoundly impact the Kingdom's mission on earth. The path doesn't matter; since, it is God who gives glory to the life and work of man.

Even Jesus at the end of his mission on earth would pray, "...Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all

flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.” John 17:1-5. I think we all ought to pray as Jesus did when our time comes to sign out from here.

Conclusion

The above simply reflects my humble thoughts and opinions on the logic of God, which in turn I venture informs His work.

Essentially, it is a perspective on the *modus operandi* of our Creator—how He has worked, or more accurately, how I have perceived Him to be working based on my experience. This has shaped my understanding and educated my faith, leading me to conclude that this may be how He has always worked.

This book is an expansion of my experiences, shaped by my unambitious efforts at logical reasoning. I share how I have perceived God's actions and how these perceptions have guided my faith journey.

By examining my experiences and applying logic, I have attempted to make sense of God's ways, and this understanding forms the foundation of this book.

In essence, this book represents my personal journey of faith, informed by a combination of experience and reasoning. Through this journey, I have come to believe that this is how God has always worked. It is the only explanation that resonates with me and makes sense of my experiences.

Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the 29th Superior General of the Society of Jesus once iterated this story of a famous abbot in the middle ages.

The abbot was known for delivering insightful talks each morning to his monks about finding God, seeking God, and encountering God. This continued until one day, a monk bravely asked if the abbot himself had ever experienced a direct encounter with God. After a moment of awkward silence, the abbot admitted that he had never had a vision or a face-to-face meeting with God. This was not unexpected, considering that God had told Moses, “You cannot see my face” (Exodus 33:20). However, God also told Moses that he could see His back as He passed by, saying, “You will see me pass.” Reflecting on this, the abbot realized that, in looking back over his own life, he could see the evidence of God's presence and actions.

Like Kolvenbach, I too believe we can only ever see where He has passed, not when he is passing.

His touch is too gentle, too ephemeral, too soft for us to perceive, we who are wired to perceive and are concerned more with explosive power. However, even when we don't see it, He is working.

This for me is my greatest challenge, to emulate my creator and God. This is the essence of the message; to try and reveal how God works so that we can relate, identify with and ultimately emulate Him. So my journey is to be like God, to be contented with soft touches, unnoticeable in the grand scale of things according to our perception, but catastrophic in their fulfillment. This is the secret to a life in the hand of God, to be okay with the simplicity of it all. It is to know that I may seem like I am standing but in fact I am sprinting.

Whenever I think of Jesus and the life he lived while on earth; nothing strikes me as that moment in Gethsemane; the most perfect human being, having lived and loved as we all should. Is now faced with a terrible situation, he obviously knows how he was about to be treated, and he calls to the one person he had always counted on, "Father, Let this cup pass from me..."

But the Father didn't rescue him, not how Jesus wanted, instead the Father sent him angels to comfort him. As if saying, "I am sorry Son; but, we must see this through." And see it through he did; thus earning our salvation.

It makes me wonder about that God and how He sees this world. If we cannot see this world how He sees it; understand His plan the way He wants it carried out; then we shall never understand anything He does, even if it is for our good. Jesus in Gethsemane was for our good; but it didn't feel so at the moment, for him.

I wonder how many times have we had our own moment in Gethsemane and instead of completing the prayer as Jesus did, "...but not my will but yours." We escape from there; because, it is too uncomfortable; inadvertently ending a move that could have saved another soul or a thousand or a million.

I am reminded by a quote by John Macmurray, in his book *The self as Agent* on how to distinguish real religion from illusory. The maxim of illusory religion runs: "Fear not; trust in God and He will see that none of the things you fear will happen to you." While that of real religion runs: "Fear not; the things that you are afraid of are quite likely to happen to you; but, they are nothing to be afraid of."

It is all so very complex, what to do and when to do it; when to accept a fate and when to fight it, how do I know it is not from God; when to stand up and when to lie down in submission, how did Jesus know not to fight back in Gethsemane, and so on and so forth. So I thought, why not conclude with some knowledge from the past, a piece of advice devised by a very practical man, and named accordingly, “Principle and Foundation” of the human life, I should add:

- A. Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls,
- B. The other things on the face of the earth are created for the human beings, to help them in the pursuit of the end for which they are created – No. I, above.
- C. From this it follows that we ought to use these things to the extent that they help us toward our end, and free ourselves from them to the extent that they hinder us from it.
- D. To attain this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things, in regard to everything which is left to our free will and is not forbidden. Consequently, on our own part we ought not to seek health rather than sickness, wealth rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, a long life rather than a short one, and so on in all other matters.
- E. Rather, we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created – No. I, above.^{xxii}

According to St. Ignatius of Loyola, everything on the face of the earth is meant to bring us into communion with God; those things have no value in and of themselves other than to bring us to this communion. So, we should use them only in as much as they aid in this and avoid them when they tempt us away from this goal.

In order to do that well, we should cultivate an attitude of indifference towards all created things; hold them in the same regard, not giving one thing priority over the others; since, they matter the same; in that, they are all meant to bring us into communion with God. However he points out that this is not true for everything, there are some things that we cannot casually cast off; for example, we cannot casually cast off our marital vows, because we have suddenly realized that marriage does not lead us to God. That is forbidden.

But otherwise, we should be ready to choose whichever path leads us to closer union with God, not preferring what we consider good over what we consider bad; not preferring health to the extent that we cannot relate with the sick in our midst, over sickness; or wealth to the extent that money becomes an idol, like the rich young man in the bible, over poverty; honor to the extent that we allow terrible things to happen in silence, rather than speak out, over dishonor; and a long life to the extent that we are willing to sacrifice any and all for it, over a short life.

Jesus cared for his life, he escaped whenever it was threatened, we have numerous gospel accounts of Jesus slipping away from people wanting to harm him. However, when it was time, he willingly accepted to be killed for the sake of fulfilling His father's will;

"...he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:8-11

This is the proper use of our free-will, to always choose to come under God's guidance; to willingly put ourselves under his authority. For a Christian, there is no place as powerful as being under the authority of God.

I would like to conclude with this thought: astronauts have a cognitive phenomenon they call, "The Overview Effect." It is when an astronaut who has been preparing for space travel for many many years; believing as many of us do that space is the new frontier, gets the opportunity to go into space. And then, this happens; as many have described it, they experience a sort of paradigm shift when they view the earth from space; when they view that tiny blue marble surrounded by an endless ocean of darkness. They suddenly see us as we really are; and this leads to a profound sense of sadness and a re-evaluation of humanity's place in the universe; and the earth's role as our mother.

Let's take a moment to reflect on this and recognize the vast difference between our minds and that of God. When we create something valuable, we typically limit its quantity to signify its worth. Market forces of supply and demand hinge on the idea that abundance lowers value, while scarcity increases it. It's no wonder that with 8 billion people on this planet, life seems so cheap to us; wars are supported despite the thousands upon thousands of lives they end, and issues like abortion are now viewed in

overwhelmingly positive light even though each operation is as end of life. I think all of this is due to the sheer number of people we see everywhere. We are actively trying to reduce our population because – in our estimation/ our narrowed perspective - there are so many of us—8 billion people!

Consider, though, a God who demonstrates value not by limiting existence to a few million people, but to billions, but enveloped in the vastness of empty space. Did you know that if each of us were allotted an area the size of Africa in space, lined up one after another, we would barely cover half the distance to Mars? Side by side on Earth, we seem plentiful, but compared to the vastness of empty/lifeless space that we know, we are rarer than anything we can conceive. Do you see how upside down everything seems to be; on earth we seem to be plentiful, but compared to the bigger picture we are the most valuable thing there is. That beggar on the street is more valuable than Jupiter in the grand scheme of things, because there are millions of gas giants in space, but only him/her – a being capable of life. Why would God—or the universe, if you prefer—arrange things in such a way?

To understand all this; to grasp why we are here, we cannot look at it from our perspective – it is too myopic; but rather from the perspective of the maker. To ask ourselves why are things the way they are? What meaning lies hidden from our understanding? We need to attempt to understand God's way of thinking, and not ascribe our way to His; we need to try and grasp the Logic of God.

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- ^v Tortora, Gerard J., and Bryan H. Derrickson. "Principles of Anatomy and Physiology." 15th edition, Wiley, 2017.
- ^{vi} <https://chat.openai.com/share/43b3abb0-7241-4368-9cf0-e37b3ef837b0>
- ^{vii} Augustine, “Confessions,” H. Chadwick, Trans., 1991, Oxford University Press, Book I: Chapter I
- ^{viii} Pope John Paul II, “Fides et Ratio,” 1998, Pauline Books and Media, No.,1.
- ^{ix} Op. cit., Augustine, Confessions, Book X: Chapter XXVII, XXXIII XXXIV
- ^x St. Ignatius of Loyola, “The Spiritual Exercises,” George E., Ganss, Trans., 2017, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, No., 327.
- ^{xi} Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd Ed., 1997, The Dogma of the Trinity, Para., 254 – 257, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- ^{xii} Ibid., CCC, Why Did the Word Become Flesh? Para., 460.
- ^{xiii} CCC 1849
- ^{xiv} Ibid., CCC, How to read the account of the fall, 390.
- ^{xv} Ibid., CCC, The Fall, Para., 385 – 421.
- ^{xvi} Ibid., CCC, The Immaculate Conception, Para., 490 – 493.
- ^{xvii} English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Crossway, Col., 3, 3.
- ^{xviii} Joseph Ratzinger: Pope Benedict XVI, “Jesus of Nazareth (Vol., 1)”, 2008, Doubleday, CH., 3.
- ^{xix} Tertullian, “Apologeticus,” CH., 50, Sect., 12.
- ^{xx} Op. cit., CCC, Part Two: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Para., 1210 – 1666.
- ^{xxi} Ibid., CCC, The Profession of Faith, Para., 791-794.
- ^{xxii} Op. cit., St. Ignatius of Loyola, “The Spiritual Exercises,” No. 23.