

# **THE BIBLE’S GENRE – A DRAMA**

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### **Section 1 - Preamble**

Universe is essentially a dynamic drama on an unimaginable scale with a playwright, presenters, a cast, and a plot.

In Chapter 2 of my book, A Biblical View of Nearly Everything, I explain in some detail (a) the nature of the Godhead, which consists of three distinct persons (God-the-Father, God-the-Son, and God-the-Holy Spirit) and (b) the various roles which these persons played, are playing, and will play in creating, sustaining, and managing Universe. Because of the role of the Godhead in the drama, I will give it the title, “The Divine Drama.”

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Divine Drama is that it has been unfolding in full sight of all mankind for almost six millennia and is fully recorded in the Bible, but most of mankind has been and continues to be oblivious to it. Unaware of the whole story, even someone who catches a piece of it cannot make sense of it. Even when he or she sees a loved one undergo a life-changing volte-face, he or she stubbornly rejects the most obvious explanation for it and completely misses its import.

### **Section 2 – The Drama’s Playwright**

The Divine Drama’s playwright is God-the-Father. He designed its theater (Universe), authored its script, and depicted all the members of the cast excepting its protagonist and antagonist.

### **Section 3 – The Drama’s Presenters**

The Divine Drama’s presenters are God-the-Son, who constructed and manages the theater and directs the performance, and God-the-Holy Spirit, who prompts the members of the cast from the prompt box.

### **Section 4 – The Drama’s Cast**

The cast of the Biblical drama is classic in its structure, with a protagonist, an antagonist, a large supporting cast, and “the girl.”

- ***The protagonist*** is God-the-Son, who uniquely combines the nature of God and the nature of a perfect man - i.e. sinless.<sup>1</sup> Everything that transpires in the drama is about Him.
- ***The antagonist*** is Satan, who was created by God to be the most intelligent and powerful of God’s creatures, but who rebelled against God and became a bitter enemy of God-the-Son. The presence and character of Satan in the drama answer the question that philosophers and theologians have been debating since the beginning of time: Whence cometh evil?
  - Some, who are called Dualists, have argued that good and evil are due to separate forces or gods, neither of whom is omnipotent or supreme. – a view held by the Manicheans and condemned by the early church as heretical. One problem for the Dualists is that the Bible indicates clearly that God is both omnipotent and sovereign over everyone and everything in heaven and on earth. Another problem

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<sup>1</sup> He has not and never will disobey His father.

for them is that evil was not present in the original creation. At the end of each day in Creation Week, God looked at the fruits of his creative work and deemed them “good.” Indeed, at the end of his creation of Adam and Eve on Day 6, he deemed them “very good.” The original creation was perfect – without any defect. Imagine a world without deceit, discord, disorder, decay, disease, or death.

- Evil only entered creation when God permitted Satan to enter creation and tempt Eve (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of the extent to which God controls and puts limits on Satan’s activities).
- Satan rebelled against God prior to creation. Thus, evil existed prior to creation, but did not enter Universe until God allowed Satan to enter Universe to serve as the antagonist in the drama.
- ***The supporting cast*** consists of all the men, women, and children who ever lived, are living, or ever will live. Regardless of their worldly status – adults or children, aristocrats or plebes, bankers or beggars, heroes or knaves, etc. – none of them or on stage for very long and all of them play minor roles in the drama.
- ***“The Girl”*** - A common theme of dramatic stories is the struggle between two men to win the hand of – or possess - “the girl.” The big question in the minds of the audience is always, “Who will get the girl?” Within the supporting cast above is a divinely appointed group whose individual names were written in the Book of Life by the divine author before the drama began. This group consists of all the men, women, and children who will, in the course of their lives, accept the protagonist as their Lord and Savior. It is known as the Bride of Messiah.

## **Section 5 – The Drama’s Plot**

The plot can be summarized in a sentence: God-the-Father is preparing a bride for his Son despite the opposition of Satan and his minions.

### **Subsection 5A - Preamble**

Before addressing the story, I want to draw your attention to three aspects of it.

- ***The weddings*** – The story begins with a wedding between Adam and Eve and will end with a wedding between Messiah and Messiah’s Bride. They serve as bookends to the story.
- ***The brides*** – There are striking similarities between the way God created a bride for the first Adam and the way God is creating a bride for Messiah...

- The first Adam's bride - On Day 6 of Creation Week, God put Adam to sleep, took flesh and bone from his side, formed Eve, and then presented Eve to Adam to be his bride.<sup>2</sup>
- The second Adam's bride - In the first century AD, God put Messiah to sleep on the cross, took blood and water from His side,<sup>3</sup> is currently forming the "Bride of Messiah," and will present her to his Son<sup>4</sup> to be His bride at the Wedding of the Lamb, which will follow the Parousia.<sup>5</sup>
- ***The testing of the bride and groom*** - Just as God would allow Satan to test Job, God allowed Satan to test Adam and Eve and then Messiah and Messiah's bride.
  - Adam and Eve – In their case, Satan began with Eve.<sup>6</sup> He undoubtedly believed that, if he could get Eve to subordinate herself to him instead of her husband, whom God had given to her to protect her, to provide for her, and to be her lord, he could use her to get at Adam, who was his main target. He probably calculated that, once he obtained her allegiance, (a) Eve's guilty feelings would cause her (i) to want company in her fallen state and (ii) to press Adam to follow her example and (b) Adam's uxoriousness would cause him (i) to listen to her and (ii) to follow her example, rather than to repudiate what she had done, as was his duty and ability to do (see Chapter 3 for a more extensive discussion of this point). Satan's strategy worked.
  - Messiah and the Bride of Messiah - In the case of Messiah, Satan tempted Him thrice: (1) prove that He is the Son of God by turning stones into bread in order to feed Himself after His forty day fast, (2) prove that He is the Son of God by throwing Himself off the roof of the Temple so that angels will save Him from striking His foot against the ground, and (3) worship Satan and Satan will give Him all the kingdoms of the world. Of course, Satan did not succeed in the case of Messiah's Bride, who consists of the faithful of all eras, Satan has tempted her in the past, is tempting her in the present, and will tempt her in the future. He suggests that she amend God's Word as did Eve, that she abandon the whole counsel of God and focus on the parts that are comforting – e.g. "God is love" - and require no repentance, no self-denial, no sacrifice, no rejection, no persecution, no suffering of any kind for the sake of her future husband's name. Of course Satan will not succeed this time, but the tension in the drama for God's people in the audience derives from the fact that he seems to be succeeding. Again and again, God's People have abandoned the whole counsel of God and

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<sup>2</sup> See Genesis 2:18-25.

<sup>3</sup> God's tool was a Roman soldier's lance.

<sup>4</sup> The Lamb of God. (John 1:36).

<sup>5</sup> See Revelation 19:6 and following.

<sup>6</sup> I reject the idea that Satan seduced Eve in the sexual sense. Many psychiatrists maintain that sexual seduction is at the root of the Biblical story of Eve's seduction in the Garden, because psychiatry itself is a derivative of Sigmund Freud's infatuation and obsession with sex and seeks to explain almost all human behavior in psychosexual terms.

worshipped false gods, health, wealth, sexual indulgence, sexual perversion, gender equivalence, gender exchange, a woman's right to kill her baby, ecumenism, universalism (alas, the list is endless). In the end, only faith in the trustworthiness of the Word of God in its entirety will sustain the Bride through the trials which Satan has in store for her.

### **Subsection 5B - The Beginning of the Story.**

- **Mankind's creation** - God created Adam and Eve to be, not just the progenitors of mankind, but the models for all men and women to follow. God gave them the assignment to subdue, cultivate, and populate the earth. Adam was responsible for (a) being a steward of the earth and (b) leading, providing for, and protecting his wife and children. Eve was responsible for (a) supporting Adam in his work and (b) bearing and raising his children.
- **The first Adam's wedding** – It is described above. God meant it to serve as a model for all weddings during the drama and to be a precursor of the last wedding.
- **Adam & Eve's Testing** – It is described above.
- **Adam & Eve's Expulsion from Eden** - After the Fall, God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden "...and placed at the east of the Garden Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 4:24) – undoubtedly to keep the way closed to anyone in a sinful state but later open to the Bride of Messiah after she has been rendered holy by the Blood of the Lamb.

### **Subsection 5C - The Middle of the Story**

After his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, man faced a dilemma. He was a sinner. He could not stop sinning. He had no way to bridge the gap between himself and God. God, however, did have a way to bridge the gap and he set about doing so. Many Christians regard it as Plan B, because they cannot believe God was responsible for the Evil One's presence and activities in Creation. On the other hand, I regard it as Plan A. I believe that God-the-Father produced the Decrees of God, which consisted of the design and the script for Universe, before God-the-Son and God-the-Holy Spirit began building, energizing, and managing Universe according to the God-the-Father's plans and specifications.

- During the period from the Expulsion to the Flood, which lasted roughly sixteen and a half centuries, God established a line of faithful men from Seth to Noah while the rest of mankind demonstrated that they could not rely on conscience to keep them from sinning.
- During the period from the Flood to Babylon's destruction, which lasted roughly two and a half centuries, God extended the line of faithful men from Noah to Abraham while the rest of mankind demonstrated that they could not rely on government to keep them from

sinning (powerful men seized control of government, built empires, and used other men to increase their power and riches).

- During the period from Babylon’s destruction to the Exodus, which lasted over six centuries, God set about forming a Holy People who would enjoy a special relationship with himself while the rest of mankind engaged in strife and plunder. These would be his Chosen People - the Oracles of God - through whom God would deliver his Word Written and his Word Incarnate to mankind. So that they would understand that their security and success in life depended completely on him, he started with Abraham and his family - a small, inconsequential tribe.
- During the period from the Exodus to Samuel’s death, which lasted over four centuries, God set about turning his Chosen People into a Holy Nation while the rest of mankind continued to engage in strife and plunder. He showed them again and again how the relationship between him and them worked: if they honored him and his commandments, he would bless them, but if they dishonored him and disobeyed his commandments, he would curse them. Thus, this period resulted in cycles of being unfaithful, then oppressed, then faithful, then blessed, then unfaithful, etc.
- During the period from Samuel’s death to Jerusalem’s destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, which lasted almost five centuries, God allowed his Chosen People to suffer the consequences of choosing a mortal man rather the eternal Almighty God to be their king, which turned out to be engaging in strife and plunder along with the rest of mankind. Again and again, Gentile armies invaded their land, destroyed their temples and palaces, and carried off their people to faraway places.
- During the period from Jerusalem’s destruction to Cyrus’s proclamation, which lasted seventy years, God allowed his people to experience exile from their land, not just as punishment for their faithlessness toward him and his commandments, but also as a foretaste of what would be the consequences of rejecting the Messiah and turning Him over to the Romans to be crucified.
- During the period from Cyrus’s proclamation to Messiah’s birth, which lasted almost five centuries, God allowed his Chosen People to suffer bondage and oppression under Gentile nations once again.
- During the period from Messiah’s birth to Messiah’s death, which lasted roughly thirty-three and a half years, God entered into his creation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth – the most stupendous event in history – which was (a) predicted by the prophets beforehand, (b) accompanied by an arrangement of stars and an appearance of angels in the sky, and (c) witnessed by both the lowly like shepherds and the great like the Magi. Messiah then showed mankind what a holy person looks like by living a sinless life of obedience to his Father in heaven and of service to His brothers and sisters on earth. Then on Passover, the King of kings and Lord of Lords allowed Himself to be scourged and crucified to atone for the sins of all those who had, who did, or who would acknowledge Him as their Lord and Savior. Finally, Messiah rose from the dead as the first fruits of the

Resurrection to come and ascended into heaven to take his rightful place on the Throne of God.

- During the period from Messiah's death to Jerusalem's destruction in 70 AD, which lasted roughly 37 years, God gave his Chosen People an opportunity to repent of their treatment of Messiah, cease the sacrifices of birds and animals in the Temple as atonement for sin, which I believe constitutes the Abomination of Desolation of which Daniel spoke, and accept Messiah as their Prophet, Priest, and King. When they failed to repent, God caused the Romans to remove them from Judea to roam the world in exile from their land.
- During the period from Jerusalem's destruction in 70 AD to Israel's establishment in 1946 AD, which lasted 1,876 years, God allowed his Chosen People to experience the rejection in Gentile lands to which they had subjected Messiah in their own land.
- During the period from Israel's establishment in 1946 to the present,

-Incomplete-

### *Subsection 5D - The End of the Story*

-Incomplete-

## **Section 6 - The Drama's Structure**

The dramatic story, or what I have been calling the Divine Drama, which follows represents my current synthesis of three organizing principles: (a) Biblical Ages, (b) Historic Eras, and (c) Covenantal Dispensations or Administrations. See Appendix F – The Divine Drama for an explanation of these principles and a fuller description of the drama which is only outlined here.

I hasten to point out that my synthesis of these three organizing principles is not as tidy as I would like, because I am aware of the minor conflicts among them and the minor issues that remain unresolved – like threads hanging off an unfinished garment. Nonetheless I believe that the unfolding history of Universe exhibits the general pattern which follows. Perhaps others will finish the garment for me.

### **ACT 1 – MANKIND'S MOMENT OF INNOCENCE**

- Scene 1 – The Prescription & the Proscription.
- Scene 2 – The First Task
- Scene 3 - The First Wedding
- Scene 4 – The Edenic Covenant (#1)<sup>7</sup>
- Scene 5 – The Fall

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<sup>7</sup> Its first expression is recorded in Genesis 1:28-29; its second, in Genesis 2:15-17.

- Scene 6 – The Adamic Covenant (#2)<sup>8</sup> & Judgment
- Scene 7 – The First Sacrifice
- Scene 8 – The Ejection from the Garden

#### **ACT 2 – THE FAILURE OF CONSCIENCE**

- Scene 1 – The Second Sacrifice
- Scene 2 – The First Murder
- Scene 3 – Intermingling of the Sons of God with the Daughters of Men
- Scene 4 – God’s Warning
- Scene 5 – The Construction of the Ark
- Scene 6 – The Flood -

#### **ACT 3 – THE FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT**

- Scene 1 – Noah’s Sacrifice
- Scene 2 – The Noachian Covenant (#3)
- Scene 3 - The Destruction of Babylon
- Scene 4 – The Spread of Idolatry

#### **ACT 4 – THE FORMATION OF A HOLY<sup>9</sup> PEOPLE**

- Scene 1 – The Election & Promise of Land, which includes *The 1<sup>st</sup> Abrahamic Covenant* (#4) and *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Abrahamic Covenant* (#5).
- Scene 2 – A Time of Testing.

#### **ACT 5 – THE FORMATION OF A HOLY NATION**

- Scene 1 – The Exodus.
- Scene 2 – The Giving of the Law in the Mosaic Covenant (#5).
- Scene 3 – The Instillation of Discipline, which included the Reaffirmation of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants and the establishment of two additional covenants: The Covenant of the Prophets (#7) and the Phinehas Covenant (#8).
- Scene 4 – The Conquest of Canaan.
- Scene 5 – The Elders & Israel’s Evil-doing.
- Scene 6 – The Period of the Judges.

#### **ACT 6 – THE FAILURE OF A HOLY KINGDOM**

- Scene 1 - The United Kingdom - During it, God established the Davidic Covenant (#9).
- Scene 2 – The Divided Kingdom.
- Scene 3 – The Single Kingdom, which included the expression of the New Covenant (#10) by Jeremiah.
- Scene 4 - The Babylonian Captivity.
- Scene 5 - The Hegemony of the World Empires BC.
- Scene 6 - The Hegemony of Rome AD.

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<sup>8</sup> Its expression is recorded in Genesis 3:14-21.

<sup>9</sup> Holy in this context means set aside for God’s purposes, separated from the world’s fleshly pursuits.

**ACT 7 – THE ADVENT OF THE HOLY ONE**, which began the Messianic Age. It coincided with the Hegemony of Rome AD.

- Scene 1 – Messiah’s Birth.
- Scene 2 – Messiah’s Childhood.
- Scene 3 – Messiah’s Youth & Maturity.
- Scene 4 – Messiah’s Ministry.
- Scene 5 – Messiah’s Crucifixion, Resurrection, & Ascension.

**ACT 8 – THE FORMATION OF A HOLY BRIDE.**

- Scene 1 – The Bride’s Childhood (Messiah’s crucifixion to 70 AD).
- Scene 2 – The Bride’s Betrothal (70 AD to the Wedding of the Lamb).

### **Section 7 – The Most Likely Question Concerning the Foregoing**

The most likely question concerning the foregoing is, Does God exercise absolute sovereignty over his Creation, determining ahead of time everything that happens in the Divine Drama, or do the players in the drama exercise free will during their lives? My answer is, Both. I draw a distinction between outside Universe and inside Universe. They are different realms. From outside Universe, God-the-Father has designed and scripted Universe from its first moment to its last, but with Universe, the players exercise their free will, and God holds them responsible for their decision. I admit that the foregoing is paradoxical, but so is the Triune Godhead. Here is how I describe it in my blob of November 26, 2018, *Are you responsible for your salvation?*

#### **Section 1 - Preamble**

Who is responsible for a person’s salvation, God, who exercises his sovereignty over his creation and its creatures, or the individual, who exercises his or her free will by accepting what God offers to all men? Consider the following verses of Scripture:

1. Jesus said to His disciples, “But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (KJV Matthew 16:15-17).
2. Jesus also said to His disciples, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (KJV John 6:38-40).
3. Jesus also said to his disciples, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (KJV John 6:44).

4. Paul wrote, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (KJV Ephesians 1:3-5).
5. Paul also wrote, “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (KJV Ephesians 1:10-14).
6. Paul also wrote, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (KJV Eph 2:8-10)
7. Paul also wrote, “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (KJV 2 Thess 2:13-14).
8. Paul also wrote, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (KJV Titus 3:5).

The common denominator among the eight passages above is the testimony that the triune God is the prime actor in a person’s salvation. God-the-Father wrote the person’s name in the Book of Life before the foundations of the world were laid. The triune God created the person. God-the-Son died on a cross to atone for the person’s sins. God-the-Father drew the person to his Son. God-the-Holy Spirit cleansed and regenerated the person and then set God’s seal on the person. Although the person will die, God-the-Son will resurrect the person on the Last Day.

After a person is saved, God is also the prime actor in that person’s sanctification. God-the-Holy Spirit enables the person increasingly to resist temptation, turn away from sinning, and move nearer to God.

### **Section 2 - Creation is a Drama**

One of the reasons why so many Christians claim that they responded to the Gospel of Christ by their own free will is that they don’t understand the nature of Creation.

Creation is a drama whose author is God-the-Father, whose producer and stage-manager is God-the-Son, and whose director is God-the-Holy Spirit. Every being who appears in this drama has a part to play – that is, his or her every thought, word, and deed has been scripted.

- Jesus of Nazareth is the protagonist of the drama, and He follows the Father’s script exactly. See John 8:28-29.
- Satan is the antagonist of the drama, and he follows the Father’s script exactly. See Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-6. Note that (a) Satan must appear in God’s throne room, (b) God requires Satan to give an account of what he has been doing, (c) God draws Satan’s attention to Job, and (d) God tells Satan exactly what he can and cannot do to Job.
- Every man, woman, or child in history has a bit part to play in the drama; if both the protagonist and the antagonist of the drama are controlled by God-the-Father’s script, isn’t it reasonable to assume that the lives of the bit players are as well?

Now, imagine a drama in which every member of the cast is free to say and do whatever he or she chooses to say and do. The result would not be a drama. It would be chaos. Consider *Othello*, *The Moor of Venice*. Imagine the thought and effort which Shakespeare put into crafting the plot, the action and the lines for Othello, Desdemona, Iago, Cassio, Brabantio, Roderigo, Emilia, and Bianca. They create the drama. If the actors abandoned the script, there would be no drama. Consider what would have happened if Othello had decided to give Desdemona a dozen roses instead of a handkerchief. Or if Desdemona had tried to wipe Othello’s face with her sleeve instead of her handkerchief. Or if Othello had put the handkerchief in his pocket, instead of dropping it on the floor. Or if Emilia had decided not to pick up the handkerchief. Or if Emilia had decided to keep the handkerchief for herself instead of giving it to Iago. Or if Iago had put something else in Cassio’s room instead of the handkerchief. Or if Cassio had failed to notice the handkerchief in his room. Or if Bianca had showed no interest in the handkerchief that Cassio was carrying. Etc. The play would fall apart.

### **Section 3 - God’s Sovereignty**

Another reason why so many Christians claim that they responded to the Gospel of Christ by their own free will is that they don’t grasp the infinite extent of God’s intellect, power, imagination, inventiveness, etc.

- The Scriptures indicate that God designed, created, and manages Universe, which is the theater in which the drama unfolds, and the earth, which is the stage on which the drama occurs. He controls the movement of every atomic particle, every atom, every molecule, every drop of water, every grain of sand, every celestial body, every galaxy, etc. He ordains every sunrise and every sunset, every cloudless day and every thunderstorm, every meteor shower and every volcanic eruption.
- The Scriptures also indicate that God designed, created, and manages the earth’s creatures. He controls every minnow or whale, every ant or elephant, every butterfly or eagle, and every man, woman, or child. He determines when, where, and why a sparrow

falls. He numbers the hairs on each person's body. He selects the members of each family, church, and nation. He ordains when a nation can live in peace and when it will be engaged in war. Absolutely nothing lies outside his purview and control – particularly something so important as the makeup of the bride whom he is preparing for his Son.

### **Section 4 - The Bride of Christ**

Why is the makeup of the Bride of Christ so important? She is important because she is at the center of Creation's story – the girl for whose allegiance the protagonist and the antagonist are contending.

Consider the plot of the story: ***God-the-Father is preparing a bride for his Son despite the opposition of Satan and his minions.*** Just as God put Adam to sleep, took flesh and bone from his side, formed Eve, and then presented Eve to Adam to be his bride on Day 6 of Creation Week, so God put Jesus to sleep on the cross, took blood and water from His side,<sup>10</sup> is currently forming the "Bride of Christ," and will present her to his Son<sup>11</sup> to be His wife at the Wedding of the Lamb.

Note that the Bible starts with a wedding between the First Adam and his bride<sup>12</sup> and ends with a wedding between the Second Adam and His bride.<sup>13</sup> These weddings are like bookends to the drama. Moreover, note that, just as Satan tried to spoil the marriage of the First Adam, which he was able to do, so now he is trying to spoil the marriage of the Second Adam, which, according to the Scriptures, he will not be able to do. Nevertheless, the tension of the drama for God's people in the audience derives from the fact that Satan seems to be succeeding in his efforts and only faith in the trustworthiness of the Word of God will sustain her through the trials which Satan has in store for her.

Do you think that God would leave the composition of his Son's bride to be determined by the whim of bit players in the drama? Would he allow them to decide for themselves whether or not they will accept or reject God's offer of salvation through faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. No. God-the-Son will have to live with His bride for all eternity. She must be perfect. God-the-Father designed her before Universe was created. Now she is being formed, educated, and trained to be a help-mate for her future spouse, to whom she is betrothed. When God-the-Father presents her to his Son, she will be complete<sup>14</sup> and perfect. There will be no surprises.

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<sup>10</sup> God's tool was a Roman soldier's lance.

<sup>11</sup> The Lamb of God. (John 1:36).

<sup>12</sup> See Genesis 2:18-25.

<sup>13</sup> See Revelation 19:6 and following.

<sup>14</sup> One of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible is 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (KJ21). Some Christians assume that Peter is referring to all people. He is not. He is referring to the people whose names God the Father wrote in the Book of Life before the foundations of the world were laid. Some believers in Peter's time had become impatient and had begun to wonder when the Lord would return, as He had promised. Peter is admonishing them to be patient, explaining that many people whose names are written in the Book of Life have not yet come into the Kingdom, for they are yet to be born. Indeed, the Gospel has yet to be preached in all nations, so that, when they are born, they can hear it and respond to it. The Lord will not come until

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His Bride is complete and therefore perfect. If He did come before then, some brothers and sisters whom God the Father has ordained be in the Kingdom would perish, which the Lord is not willing to let happen.