

The Big Picture

By Stephen M. Golden

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Introduction

The setting opens with God in heaven. It's right after a great rebellion has taken place. A tremendous battle has ended where Satan and a third of the angels have been cast out.¹ Satan is bitter. He's convinced what he did was right, and that there is no reason God should have the control that he does over the universe. He believes he could have won if only more angels had rebelled with him. He believes he has to try to regain standing, so he issues God a challenge....

This is an attempt to explain many of the troubling questions about God and Satan that otherwise seem unanswerable. The method used is to take the Word of God at face value and attempt to infer what conditions would result in what we see in the world. Many scientists use similar methods with regard to discoveries they make. I admit, this leads to considerable speculation, but I do not believe it is inappropriate speculation. Ultimately, the result should be a coherent explanation of what we see as but a small fragment of an immense picture to which the Word of God alludes.

¹ Revelation 12:7-9; 12:1-4a; Luke 10:18; Isaiah 14:12; Matthew 25:41

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A Bigger Picture than we see

Often people ask questions about the world and about God that seem unanswerable. However, I believe these questions do have answers, and we can gain insight into many of those answers if we take pause long enough to try to comprehend the big picture. Here are some of the issues, statements, and questions that point to the big picture.

- Why did God create us?
- Why didn't God destroy Satan when he rebelled?
- Why doesn't God destroy Satan now?
- Why is Satan the Lord of this world?
- Why did the Son of God have to appear in order to destroy the Devil's Work? ("The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." 1 John 3:8b)
- Why do we have to pray to accomplish God's purposes?
- Why do we have to pray multiple times to affect God's action?
- Why does the shedding of blood atone for sin?
- Why is death an enemy to be destroyed and why is it last? ("The last enemy to be destroyed is death." 1 Corinthians 15:26)
- Why does time have to pass in order for God to put Christ's enemies under His feet? Matthew 22:44 "The Lord said to my Lord:

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“Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.” (and other verses)

- Why doesn't God speak to us directly?
- Why doesn't God heal all our illnesses?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- Why does God use angels?

These are only some of the many questions people have that are troublesome and that cause some people's faith to falter. At those times it is helpful to remember that we don't know everything and to understand there is a bigger picture than we see.

Scriptural Indications of a bigger picture than we see

Many scriptures indicate there is a bigger picture than we see. Jesus indicated there are things hidden since creation:

Matthew 13:33-35

33 He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

34 Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable.

35 So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, **I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.**”

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Paul told us there are things he heard while in paradise that he was forbidden to tell

2 Corinthians 12:3-4

3 And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—

4 was caught up to paradise. **He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.**

In Revelation 10:3-5, a voice from heaven told John to not write down what one of the seven thunders had revealed.

“Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.”

This indicates a portion of truth was revealed that we on this Earth were not to know—at least not yet!

Paul also tells us there is a battle going on among great powers and that there is wickedness in high places.

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

When Paul was being taken to Rome, the ship encountered a great storm. Paul informed the captain that God Would save them, but when some men attempted to leave the ship in a lifeboat, Paul said, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be

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saved.” (Romans 27:31) This indicates Paul was aware God had a bigger picture of the situation. Couldn't God have saved them anyway? We like to think so, but we don't know everything. God told Paul it had to be done just this way or it wasn't going to happen. We don't know the agreements God has already made and what steps He must take to intervene in this world.

Paul gives another indication there is a bigger picture in that, for some reason, the appearance of men and women has a relationship to angels.

1 Corinthians 11:8-10

8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man;

9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

10 For this reason, **and because of the angels**, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

Other Biblical writers indicate there are great things going on that are outside of our experience.

2 Peter 2:10b-12a

10b ...Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to **slander celestial beings**;

11 **yet even angels**, although they are stronger and more powerful, **do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings** in the presence of the Lord.

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12 But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand...

In Acts 12:7-10 an angel of the Lord had to physically come to walk Peter out of Jail. Why couldn't God have just transported Peter to a safe place? We don't know. We don't know everything; God does.

We do not see everything subject to God at this time. It still is subject to Him, but we don't see it as such:

Hebrews 2:7-8

7 You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor

8 and put everything under his feet.” In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. **Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.**

Again, we don't see the big picture that is implied.

Michael disputed with Satan over the body of Moses.

Jude 9-10a

9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was **disputing with the devil about the body of Moses**, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand;...

That indicates Satan wanted it for some reason. At the very least, it indicates things are happening

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between the physical and spiritual realms without our comprehension of them.

We are told in Daniel 10:12-13 that the angel who appeared to Daniel was delayed in answering Daniel's prayer by another "angel" who had power on the earth. (Some translations obscure this truth.) It was not until Michael came to his assistance that he was able to get through. Spiritual forces and entities are at work in our world.

A Different Perspective

You've probably heard people use the term "the big picture" at various times. They probably have "big pictures" of varying sizes in mind, depending on their frame of reference. But let's consider the all-encompassing big picture. This "big picture" is so much bigger than you may have ever imagined.

If you're a Christian, your view of "the Big Picture" probably consists of a belief that God created the heavens and the earth, put man in the Garden of Eden under specific conditions, man rebelled and was thrown out of the garden, then at some point God sent Jesus to save everyone from sin, and someday will return to earth to judge the world. There are many variations and additional details that could be added

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to that summary, but I think this brief description sums it up for most of us.

As Christians, we are compromised. We have been raised in a culture in which an evolutionary mindset is almost inevitable, even if we don't believe in evolution.

For example: Think of “cave men” in your mind right now. Have you got an image in your mind? Now, imagine that your cave man, the one you have in your mind right now, is a mental genius.

It doesn't fit, does it?

You see, we tend to consider people who came before us as less intelligent than we are. The farther back we go in the “evolutionary framework,” the more profound of a difference we imagine. Similarly, we tend to regard the things people before us have said and written as more naive and invalid the farther back we go in history.

Let's take a step back however, throw off our egos, and reconsider our situation. If we believe God created the world and the first man, then the first man must have been the most complete and perfect man who ever existed—except Jesus. Man, like everything else, has degenerated with time.

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Therefore, as you go back in history, the closer you get to the first man, the more intelligent men in general must have been. It is reasonable to conclude Adam was also the most intelligent man who ever lived, and Eve the most intelligent woman.

Even today Archaeologists are baffled by discoveries of technology and knowledge that were in advance of our own, and are lost to us today. (See <https://www.smgolden.com>, the Theology menu, "Ancient Technology".)

Studies of ancient languages by linguists have resulted in the conclusion that the older the language, the more complex the language is.²

At the very least, man was not any less intelligent than he is today. I bring this up because many try to discredit ancient writings simply on the basis of their having been written by people long ago who supposedly had less ability to understand the world than we think we have today.

We have a revelation from God about the beginning. He was there. He described it to reliable and honest men who wrote it down. These writings were kept in a meticulous manner throughout the ages such that copies separated by thousands of years are virtually identical! However, due to our cultural skepticism,

² <https://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/LifeSciences16.html>

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and the influence of evolutionary thinking, many discredit these writings.

“If all that stuff in the Bible were true, there should be corroboration in the other cultures of the earth.”
There is.

Here’s one example:

Up until the early 1940’s The Emperor of China performed the annual “Border Sacrifice to Shang Ti.”³ The words he was prescribed to say are surprisingly like a summary of the first chapters of Genesis. One dialectic pronunciation of Shang Ti is phonetically identical to Shaddai, a Hebrew word for God (El Shaddai).

It can be shown that Chinese pictographs (the method the Chinese use to write) have been derived from symbols representing creation, the garden, people being cast out of the garden, the flood, and many other concepts that validate Biblical writings.

There are tales of a global flood in nearly every culture of the world. These stories existed before any Christians ever reached these cultures.

Modern historians say European history before about 50 BC is a mystery because they reject the historical

³ Dr. Ethel R. Nelson & Richard E. Broadberry, *Genesis and the Mystery Confucius Couldn't Solve*

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documents which have been found as being correct. They reject these documents primarily because they *all* validate the “table of nations” found in Genesis.

I have said all of this to introduce the bigger picture that so many miss. When we buy into the world’s explanation for things, or when our faith begins to falter somewhat because of what man says, we are rejecting God’s Word in a subtle way. We need to overcome this subtle rejection of God’s Word to be able to see this big picture.

Seeing the Big Picture

Let’s see whether we can catch a glimpse of the big picture. Imagine the almighty God and His host of heavenly beings having just quashed a massive rebellion of Satan and a third of the angels. They are not destroyed, just cast out of heaven.

God, for whatever reason, working through constraints, has to follow certain prescribed steps to complete their destruction. Some may object to my proposal that God is working through constraints, but consider this: God is faithful and keeps His promises. Any promise He has made may conflict with our idea of how things ought to be done. We don't know what promises He might have made, but His being faithful to them would appear to us as a constraint.

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Satan, still bitter about being thrown out of God's presence, offers a challenge to God. Perhaps Satan said something like this: "I'm willing to wager that you could create a world of beings, give them free will, and even though you give them everything, in a short time I could get them to rebel against you. In a couple of generations, they won't even believe you exist." Before you object to this speculation out of hand, we have a record of God doing something very much like this in the book of Job.⁴

You see, for us, our role in the big picture is faith. As the writer of Hebrews reminds us (Hebrews 11:6) "... without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Some might say, "But the Scriptures are nothing more than the writings of uneducated, ignorant, and superstitious men. Why doesn't God talk to me?"

If God were to talk to you directly, give you a revelation and ask you to write it down, immediately after you wrote it down, some people would disbelieve you. After a time, perhaps immediately, people would consider what you wrote to be the writings of an uneducated, ignorant, or superstitious person. What

⁴ Job 1:6-12

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you wrote wouldn't be any less true however, and whoever heeded the words of God would receive a blessing.

This is where we are today—except *you* weren't the person to whom God spoke.

Satan's goal is to destroy belief (faith) in God. He begins by planting seeds of doubt in our minds regarding God's Word. This was his first attack against God's creation ("You will not surely die"⁵), and it has been one of his primary weapons ever since. You see, Satan didn't go up to Adam & Eve and suggest they rebel against God. Instead, he just created a little doubt in what God said.

So, if our role in the big picture is faith, and the importance we place on understanding and relating this reality reflects both the quality and quantity of our faith, it is incumbent on us to believe the Word of God *first*.

"We must judge the words of man against the Word of God, and not the other way around." —Ken Ham

⁵ Genesis 3:4

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The Rebellion

First, what do we know about the rebellion? Satan & one third of the angels warred against God. God did not destroy Satan & his angels at that time, but cast them out of heaven.

Ezekiel 28:16-17

16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.

17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth;

Revelation 12:3-4

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.

4 His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.

Revelation 12:7-9

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

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9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

1 Timothy 3:6

and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

Isaiah 14:12-15

12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!

13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

15 But you are brought down to the grave,

Luke 10:18

[Jesus] replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

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2 Peter 2:4

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

Jude 1:6

And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

When did the rebellion occur?

An ongoing battle between God & Satan began even before the creation of man—and is going on now. There are at least two ways of reconciling when the rebellion occurred:

1. One Creation Event

If we work under the premise that there was one creation event which included the entire universe, and it was completed in six literal days, it would seem difficult to reconcile when the rebellion of Satan and his angels began and took place. Taking Dr. Russell Humphrey's theory of gravitational time dilation⁶ into account, this battle could have begun in heaven sometime after God said, "Let there be light," and before God created man. As God stretched out the

⁶ *Starlight and Time*, D. Russell Humphreys, Ph.D.

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universe, six literal days on earth could have been millions of years in heaven; the rebellion took place.

2. Two Creation Events

On the other hand, you could go with the premise that the angels are a separate act of creation prior to the creation of our universe; they are therefore not a part of our universe. I believe this is the most likely premise because otherwise angels fall under the curse as a result of man's sin.

Romans 8:22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

I do not believe the angels are suffering as a result of man's sin except perhaps in empathy.

In Hebrews 9:11 the writer clearly says some things that exist are not part of this creation:

Hebrews 9:11

“When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, **not a part of this creation.**”

I believe the angels belong to that other creation as well. If the heavenly “tabernacle” exists as part of a different creation, those attending to it would also.

A few verses later, the Hebrews writer makes a subtle statement that may also indicate there is more than

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one creation. He says, “since the creation of the world” instead of “since creation.”

Hebrews 9:26

Then Christ would have had to suffer many times **since the creation of the world**. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

This may imply the existence of a creation other than the creation of the world.

Either way, we know Satan and his angels fell before Adam & Eve's sin, and I believe they fell before God decided to create Adam & Eve.

Satan issues a Challenge to God

It is my belief that the very creation of our world and even the universe is the result of a challenge from Satan to God after being expelled from heaven. Let's consider the possibility of such a challenge by Satan to God as I mentioned earlier, it might have been something like I described before, “...Why, you could even create a new set of beings with free will and within a few generations they will not only turn their backs on you, they will deny you even exist.”

Let's suppose the challenge continues: “You can tell them not to do just one thing—just one thing—and they will do it anyway.”

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So, they worked out a test. God would create a perfect place in which man might live: a beautiful garden. There was to be placed in the midst of the garden some condition that would have to be obeyed lest a serious consequence result. Such as, all of creation would be subject to Satan's temptations—within limits—and require redemption. Satan would become the prince of this world. God would have to withdraw from direct intervention. God's creation would be subject to Satan's invention: Death! If this were to occur, to redeem the world, some other action on God's part would be required.

They reached an agreement. The test was set up. God created man, and man rebelled.

What was the required action on God's part to redeem His creation? The cost of redemption was the sacrifice of a sinless being to voluntarily suffer the price of sin.

Satan **now** stands condemned. With Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, the action on God's part was complete.

John 16:11

[just before Jesus' ascension] ...and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

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What remained, and remains today, is to redeem as many of his creation as possible.

God and Satan have negotiated in the past

Why would I speculate God and Satan might negotiate in this manner? As I mentioned previously, the Bible tells us there has been negotiation and bantering between God and Satan in the past.

Job 1:6-9,12

6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.

7 The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.”

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”

9 Then Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing?”

...

12 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.”

So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

Satan negotiates directly with God.

Another indication that God and Satan negotiate:

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Luke 22:31-32

31 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.

32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

At the following prophetic vision, Satan is in the presence of God accusing His servants.

Zechariah 3:1-2

1 Then the angel showed me Jeshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD. Satan was there at the angel's right hand, accusing Jeshua of many things.

2 And the LORD said to Satan, “I, the LORD, reject your accusations, Satan. Yes, the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. This man is like a burning stick that has been snatched from a fire.”

Satan is right there accusing.

Satan accuses believers before the throne of God day and night.

Revelation 12:10

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

“Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.

For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

Satan was permitted to tempt Jesus

Matthew.4:1

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Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

Luke 4:1-2

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,

2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.

Satan has authority

Jesus did not take issue with Satan when he said he had been given authority over the kingdoms of the world.

Luke 4:5-6

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

6 And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.

Someone who had the authority gave it to Satan. Only One has the authority. Why would God give Satan such authority? It was part of the big picture.

Satan is Lord of this world

Satan is Prince or Ruler of this world at this time.

John 12:31

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

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Jesus confirms that Satan is still here and still prince of this world in John 14:30 and John 16:11.

Paul calls Satan the ruler of the kingdom of the air in Ephesians 2:1-23.

John tells us the whole world is under the power of the evil one in 1 John 5:19.

Peter tells us in 1 Peter 5:8 the devil prowls around like a roaring lion.

The demons implicitly indicate they are aware of a time at which they will no longer have the freedom they now enjoy.

Matthew 8:29

“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted.

“Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

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John tells us that the world is under the control of the evil one.

1 John 5:19

“We know that... the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Satan asked—and got permission—to test Peter.

Luke 22:31

31 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;

32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

The Archangel, Michael, had to contend with Satan over the body of Moses

Jude 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

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The Rules

There are rules to this continuing conflict that were established before God created man. When Satan issued the challenge to God, they established a vast, complex set of rules. Satan's goal was to outwit God. However, things didn't quite work out the way Satan thought they would.

Examples of the Rules:

Here are some examples of rules that might have been established and seem to be in place in order to explain what we see today.

- If Adam and Eve fail the test in the garden, a curse of death must be placed on the whole of creation. God must remove His sustaining presence, and allow evil to work. Death will enter the world. The world will become Satan's realm.
- Each time man rebels, it will require forgiveness that must be attained through the shedding of blood to redeem him (or her).
- The shedding of a perfect one's blood can redeem all people, but is only valid for those who are willing to accept that substitution as acknowledged by public expression of faith in that one.

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- When man rebels, he becomes under Satan's realm and must be redeemed in order for God to have him again.
- Except to men of faith at specific times, communication to people and from people can only be by the spirit. Faith must be exhibited through prayer and other evidences, or God is not to respond. **Other events and circumstances can warrant God's intervention and override this restriction.**
- Those who believe in God and Jesus, His Son, must ask for specific things—even things God wants to happen—or they will not happen except by random chance.
- Satan will reign on Earth. It will be his realm until the “fullness of time.”
- Satan holds the power of death! However, in Jesus’ death a key element in Satan’s destruction was accomplished.
Hebrews 5:14
Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy **him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—**
And again:
John 16:11

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...and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world **now stands condemned**.

John 2:31

Now is the time for judgment on this world; **now the prince of this world will be driven out**. 32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

- God will not be able to act directly on the earth except in very specific circumstances, usually after great faith is exhibited, and after much prayer. (See <https://www.smgolden.com>, Theology menu, "The Prayer Product".)
- God cannot communicate directly with people except through his word, and in some rare cases, in oblique ways to ones of great faith.

These predetermined rules *could* be the primary reason God does things in the world the way He does, and why He uses angels to perform many tasks.

Corollaries:

God's desire is to have as many of His creation redeemed as possible.

Satan's goal is to make as many of God's creation as possible “lost” to God, under the agreement. (See page

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21) Satan's goal is not necessarily to make people evil, but lost.

How many people will God win? World-wide, a historical mortality truth is that 66% of everyone conceived in the womb failed to live to see the fifth year of life. If children are innocent, and automatically receive salvation, estimates of the combined total of these children with everyone who has accepted Jesus as God's Son through the ages equals approximately 77% of all people who were ever conceived. So by default, God wins 77% of His creation. Nevertheless, God wants to redeem as many souls as He can, so He's working hard on those who are still alive.⁷

God allows man to have free will; Satan attempts to control man's free will.

God knows people's hearts and minds. Satan does not. Satan places thoughts into people's hearts and minds and waits for the response.⁸ God knows what each person is thinking. Satan knows the kinds of weaknesses humans have, and watches their behavior for telltale signs of those weaknesses in individuals.

In the book of Revelation, the horsemen describe evil brought upon men with God's consent. If, as many

⁷ Derived from *Secrets of the Koran p.240-241*, by Don Richardson

⁸ *Bondage Breaker*, by Neil T. Anderson

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believe, these tribulations represent the death and plagues encountered throughout history, this could easily reflect the enactment of the rules agreed upon between God and Satan.

The Issue is Faith

It's an issue of faith. Can we, as created beings, humble ourselves and acknowledge the Almighty God? This "faith challenge" has been predominant throughout history. It was the reason God chose Abraham and it was pressing even on our Lord's mind here on Earth.

Luke 18:8

"I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, **when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"**

Accommodating the Rules

At some point before Jesus came to earth, He was set apart as the perfect one whose blood would be shed.

John 10:36

what about **the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world?** 6Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'?

God put His plan in place to remedy this great transgression

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Acts 2:23

this Man, delivered over by the **predetermined plan** and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross

Matthew 25:41

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire **which has been prepared** for the devil and his angels;

John 19:28

After this, Jesus, **knowing that all things had already been accomplished**, to fulfill the Scripture, said, “I am thirsty.”

The steps of the plan were put in place; Jesus completed what He had to complete to destroy Satan, sin, and death—but the consummation of the destruction is yet to come. Let's look at some of the details of this plan.

God can not destroy Satan until a sequence of actions and conditions take place first. Some of these events we know and some we do not know, as we saw earlier.

Matthew 25:41 “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been **prepared for the devil and his angels**;

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John 16:11 *[just before Jesus' ascension]*...and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world **now stands condemned**.

Satan was not condemned before this!

Death is an enemy to be destroyed

1 Corinthians 15:26

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Revelation 20:10

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 20:14

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

There is an appointed time for Satan and his angels to be tormented.

Matthew 8:29

“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted.
“Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

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Part of the deal:

As part of the deal, Jesus had to submit to Satan's testing and scrutiny while He was on Earth. Satan gave it his best shot.

Mark 1:13a

And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan;

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Constraints

God works through constraints. Whether self imposed, or simply the way things are, God works His will in ways we often do not understand. Instead of performing out and out miracles, He usually causes a host of things to come together, for a multi-faceted result. Even though we believe God could simply do everything immediately, He works through various constraints either to prevent other things from being affected, or to comply with promises previously made.

Evidences of Constraints

Under the agreement, God's interaction with creation is constrained. Only certain types of interaction would be “allowed.” (See page 21)

Luke 12:49-50

49 “I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!

50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!

Jesus wanted so much to see Jerusalem come to Him, but he was constrained.

Luke 13:34

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather

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your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

Through Jesus' dying, he was able to render the devil powerless.

Hebrews 2:14

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

How does that work? It has to have been part of the negotiated agreement between Satan and God. (See page 21)

Jesus had to come to earth to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3:8

the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

In other words, the works of Satan could not be destroyed if Jesus had not come to earth.

God works to produce a Result

God doesn't simply know the future, He makes the future. God actively works to fulfill prophecy; it's not necessarily something that is just going to happen. It

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is what He says He will do. (See <https://www.smgolden.com>, Theology menu, "The Knowledge of God".)

Matthew 13:35

This was **to fulfill** what was spoken through the prophet:

“I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES;

I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.”

Matthew 21:4

This **took place to fulfill** what was spoken through the prophet:

Matthew 26:54 - 56

54 “**How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled**, which say that it must happen this way?”

55 At that time Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me.

56 “But all this has taken place **to fulfill** the Scriptures of the prophets.” Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

See also: Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 2:23; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; John 12:38; Mark 14:49; John 19:24; 19:36

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The Plan of Salvation

God's "plan of salvation" has varied over the ages

God has had to work different plans because of our failures:

Hebrews 8:6-9

6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.

8 But God found fault with the people and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

There was even the possibility of a different plan while Jesus was on the earth.

Luke 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

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Jesus even petitioned the Father to alter the plan, indicating that Jesus believed it was possible.

Matthew 26:39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

God's plan of salvation accomplishes not only our reconciliation but also Satan's demise.

John 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

Acts 2:24 But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Romans 6:9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

2 Timothy 1:10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death

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and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

Hebrews 2:9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 2:14-15

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Revelation 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

Blood and the shedding of blood have special and spiritual significance.

Cain & Abel —Abel's blood cries up from the ground.

Gen.4:10

The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.

4:11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

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In sacrifices for sin, it is most holy to God.

Ex.30:10

“Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.”

Hebrews 9:22

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Jesus had to shed His blood

In order for God to redeem His creation, a perfect being, His only son, it turns out, had to shed His blood from a human body. It was part of the deal.

Matthew 26:39

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

Matthew 26:42

He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

Mark 14:36

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And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Luke 22:42-43

42 saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

The shedding of His blood could not be taken away. It had to be completed.

Prayer

Those who believe in God and in Jesus, His Son, have to ask for specific things. The faithful have to request things—including things we presume God would like to happen anyway. Evidently, some of these things cannot happen unless the faithful request them.

Faith is essential

Faith on the part of the petitioner is required in order to perform any miraculous work — up to and including salvation.

Matthew 8:9

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For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.”

Luke 7:8

For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.”

Mark 6:5-6

5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.

6 And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

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Matthew 9:28-30

28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

“Yes, Lord,” they replied.

29 Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith will it be done to you”;

30 and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.”

Matthew 15:27-28

27 “Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.”

28 Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Matthew 9:21-22

21 She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.”

22 Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed from that moment.

Mark 5:34 He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Mark 10:51-52

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51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

52 “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Luke 7:50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Luke 17:19 Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

Luke 18:42 Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

These scriptures indicate that faith is necessary for miracles.

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The prayer/faith threshold

There is a “prayer/faith threshold” that must be reached in order to get an answer to prayer. (See <https://www.smgolden.com>, Theology menu, "The Prayer Product") This threshold can be exceeded through much fervency on the part of a single individual, or the perhaps “not so fervent” prayers of many individuals.

James 5:16

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Matthew 9:22

But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour.

Matthew 9:29

Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.”

Matthew 17:20

So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

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Matthew 21:22

“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

Mark 11:23

“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

Other indications of a bigger picture than we know:

In addition to statements regarding faith, prayer, Satan's rebellion, and statements by Jesus that indicate a bigger picture, there are other indications of a bigger picture than we know.

Hebrews 1:14

Are not all **angels ministering spirits** sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 13:2

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing **some people have entertained angels without knowing it.**

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Hebrews 9:11

When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, **not a part of this creation.**

There is more to creation than what we can see and than what has been revealed to us.

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Final Conflict

So in the end, there will be a battle that will defeat Satan once and for all. If that is the case, why does Satan even try? Doesn't Satan know God is more powerful than he is, and that he is certainly going to lose?

Satan has at least three reasons to keep fighting.

First, to make as many souls lost for eternity as he can. He knows this hurts Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit very much.

Second, he hopes to gain the upper hand through the rules, or through a distortion of the rules. Perhaps he believes that the more minds he has on his side, the more power he can muster against God

And finally, Satan truly believes he can win. You see, Satan has an evolutionary view of the universe. Satan is the first Evolutionist. He doesn't believe God created everything. He certainly doesn't believe God created him! He believes that the universe and many entities in it came into being on their own. You see, Satan believes the only true advantage God has over him is that God popped into being perhaps only moments before he did.⁹

⁹ *The Long War Against God*, Dr. Henry M. Morris

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Nevertheless, God's outcome is assured.

Conclusion

This has been just a glimpse at the Big Picture. There is indeed a Big Picture. God simply has not told us everything. My presentation of the Big Picture may not be correct on all points—it may not be correct on many points at all! We may only find out for sure after our Lord returns. However, at least my presentation opens up the field of thought and attempts to answer many of the difficult theological questions people have asked me over the years without resorting to cliché and patronization. I hope it has been an interesting and informative adventure for you.