

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 31 October 2022

Greetings.

Many know today as 'Reformation Day' because 31<sup>st</sup> October marks the anniversary of the date in 1517:

- (i) on which (according to Philip Melancthon, writing all of thirty years later) Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the West Door of the All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, Germany;
- (ii) on which Luther sent his Theses to Albert of Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Mainz:[\[i\]](#)
- (iii) which is generally identified as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, sending a shockwave through the whole of Christendom.

One striking feature in Martin Luther's many writings is the amount of space devoted to the believer's conflict with the devil. Luther made it very clear that, to him, the devil was real, evil and personal.

Perhaps his best-known words about the devil are those of the opening verse of his hymn, 'A Mighty Fortress is our God':[\[ii\]](#)

For still our ancient foe  
Doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
And, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

Here is a small sample of relevant quotations from Luther:

(i) 'When I awoke last night, the Devil came and wanted to debate with me; he rebuked and reproached me, arguing that I was a sinner. To this I replied: Tell me something new, Devil! I already know that perfectly well; I have committed many a solid and real sin. Indeed there must be good honest sins -- not fabricated and invented ones -- for God to forgive for His beloved Son's sake, who took all my sins upon Him ... When the Devil harasses us, then we know ourselves to be in good shape!'  
(Quoted by Heiko Oberman, *Luther: the Man between God and the Devil*, pages 105-106.)

(ii) 'Reader ... pray for the increase of preaching against Satan. For he is powerful and wicked, today more dangerous than ever before because he knows that he has only a short time left to rage'.  
(Luther's autobiography (1545), quoted by Heiko Oberman, *op. cit.*, page 154.)

(iii) 'We need not invite the Devil to our table; he is too ready to come without being asked'.  
(Quoted by Jules Michelet, *The Life of Luther*, page 322.)

(iv) 'Now and then the devil drives out of us a sour and bitter sweat, but he cannot bring us to despair; for Christ always has kept the field, and through us will keep it still. Through hope, in all manner of trials and temptations, we hold ourselves on Christ'.  
(Martin Luther, *Table Talk (translated by William Hazlitt)*, DCVII.)

(v) 'The power the devil exercises is not by God commanded, but God resists him not, suffering him to make tumults, yet no longer or further than he wills, for God has set him a mark, beyond which he neither can nor dare step.  
When God said, concerning Job, to Satan: "Behold, he is in thy hands, yet spare his life", this power was by God permitted, as if God should say: "I will so far permit and give you leave, but touch not his life".'  
(Martin Luther, *op. cit.*, DCX.)

There is no doubt that, at times, Luther did attribute too much to the devil (seeing Satan and his demons virtually everywhere) and that some of Luther's views and comments about the devil were rather childish, superstitious and, frankly, crude.

Nevertheless, the writings of the great Reformer serve as **a timely reminder of how necessary it is that we be constantly vigilant in the face of our Adversary's relentless onslaught** (1 Pet. 5. 8).

With this in mind, I take the opportunity today of giving below the first of a two-part study on the devil's successful temptation of Eve in the garden of Eden.

Happy reading.

Malcolm

### Notes

[i] We can confidently say, therefore, that the Ninety-five Theses were '*mailed*' even if we cannot be certain that they were '*nailed*'. 😊

[ii] With good reason, this hymn (Luther's paraphrase of Psalm 46) has been called, 'The Battle Hymn of the Reformation'.

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## The Temptation of Eve. Part 1.

### SCRIPTURE

The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food ...

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 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' ...

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God really said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"'

And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die"'.  
'

Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You shall not surely die. For God knows that in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil'.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

Genesis 2. 8-9, 16-17, 3. 1-7.

### THE IDENTITY OF 'THE SERPENT'

There can be no doubt about the identity of the one spoken of as 'the serpent' in the first book of the Bible. For the last book of the Bible tells of a time when 'the great dragon was cast out, *that old* ('ancient') *serpent*, called the devil and Satan, who *deceives* the whole world'.<sup>1</sup>

And the devil occupies that role of *deceiver* from (i) the very *first* (when 'the woman said, "The serpent beguiled (*deceived*) me and I did eat"<sup>2</sup>) to (ii) the *last* (when, following the final uprising at the very end, on the borderland of eternity, 'the devil that *deceived* them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone').<sup>3</sup>

### THE DEVIL – THE OBJECTIVE

Many of us are familiar with the account of the devil's success in the Garden. It all seemed so effortless, so very simple – and it was over so quickly. But was it really that easy?

I think not and I want, therefore, to consider the devil's main objective, the daunting obstacles which he faced, how he went about surmounting those obstacles and, finally, the strategy which he adopted so successfully.

It hardly needs to be said that the devil's immediate objective was to persuade the woman (and Adam) to eat the forbidden fruit. But, further to that, we need to ask, 'Why?'—what was in it for him?

### Revealing names and titles

We are not told, but I suggest that we find a clue in a few of the names and titles given to him in scripture.

(i) On almost 50 occasions, he is called 'Satan',<sup>4</sup> a Greek name derived from the Aramaic, meaning 'adversary' and 'opponent'.

(ii) He is called 'the wicked one' ('*the evil one*'), thirteen times in the New Testament (about half of those references occurring in either John's gospel or his first epistle), where the word translated 'wicked' (or 'evil') indicates one who is evil, not so much in his *character*, as 'in his *influence and effect*'. That is, his is a malignant evil, that which causes harm and trouble to others.<sup>5</sup>

(iii) He is characterised twice by our Lord Jesus Himself as 'the enemy', as one who is hostile.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear from these descriptions—and from the teaching of scripture in general—that the serpent-devil was (and is) opposed to God and to all that which is of God and that, from the beginning, his purpose and his goal have been to ruin and to destroy as much of God's handiwork as he was (and is) able.

### A known destiny

Scripture also makes it clear that the devil is under no illusion about his destiny. He knows well that God has prepared the lake of fire for his eternal abode.<sup>7</sup>

In Isaiah 14, which many believe points beyond 'the King of Babylon' to his Satanic Majesty, God addresses 'Lucifer' ('the Day Star'), 'the son of morning' with the words, 'You said in your heart ... I will be like the Most High. Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit'.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from which, in our Lord's teaching concerning the judgement of the nations, we have His statement to those on His left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'.<sup>9</sup> In passing, it is well worth noting that God has neither prepared 'eternal fire' for men, nor men for it!<sup>10</sup>

Oh yes, if the devil can hear and read, he knows his decreed fate well enough.

In this connection, I note the cry of the two demon-possessed men of Gadara: 'What have we to do with you, Jesus, you Son of God? *Have you come here to torment us before the time?*'<sup>11</sup> They, at least, had no doubts about their long-term future!

Concerning Satan himself, we are told explicitly in Revelation 12 that the day will come when the great dragon, the 'deceiver', will be cast down to the earth and a great voice from heaven will declare, 'Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because *he knows that he has a short time*'.<sup>12</sup> And I suspect that the serpent-dragon knows now—and, indeed, knew back in Genesis 3—that his doom is sealed ... and is sealed by Almighty God.

Such passages as these portray Satan as a malicious and venomous creature.

Justly cast out and banished from God's favour himself, the devil could now only envy, resent and begrudge man his exalted and privileged position as the one to whom God had entrusted dominion over the earth.<sup>13</sup> And at the same time, no doubt, he wished to spite God Himself by bringing about the downfall of God's masterpiece ... the downfall of man, who, by reason of being created both last and in God's image, stood at the very pinnacle of the physical creation.

### THE DEVIL – THE HURDLES

But it was going to be an uphill climb for the devil. However could he persuade Adam and Eve to do something (to eat of the forbidden fruit) when, on the one hand, they had absolutely no reason *to do it* and on the other, they had one very powerful reason *not to?*

(i) On the one hand, they had no need whatever to eat this particular fruit. God's unstinting generosity and lavish provision for them<sup>14</sup> had made this altogether unnecessary.

(ii) On the other hand, the devil faced the seemingly insurmountable barrier of God's unambiguous warning: 'in the day that you eat of it you shall surely ('you shall certainly') die'.<sup>15</sup>

The Lord God's warning could not have been clearer and it could not have been stronger. There was no room for the first couple to have any doubt either about its meaning or its seriousness. Adam may not have fully understood the meaning of the word 'die' but he knew it was not something to be relished.

## THE DEVIL – THE FORMIDABLE TASK

Taking these two considerations together means that the devil faced a formidable task indeed.

If he were to have any hope of success, he would need to accomplish two things at least:

(i) first, he would need to convince Adam and Eve that God was *lying* when He warned that death would be the inevitable consequence of eating the forbidden fruit, and

(ii) second, he would need to convince Adam and Eve that it was indeed very much in their interests to eat it.

There was obviously no mileage in his going straight up to Adam (or Eve for that matter), quoting what God had actually said and then immediately and blatantly denying that it was true.

It is important to note that the serpent did not quote what God had said.

Anything but.

God had said, 'I have given you every herb producing seed that is on the whole earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree producing seed: it shall be food for you'<sup>16</sup> ... 'of every tree of the garden you may freely eat'.<sup>17</sup>

In marked contrast, the serpent questioned whether God had said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'.

That is, Satan's opening shot was **not**, as is often supposed, to call in question God's word!

He would shortly do just that, as he has done on innumerable occasions since, but that was not what he was doing when he asked, 'has God said ...?'<sup>18</sup> This was a genuine question—which called for an answer—although, as we will see, the question itself formed part of a sinister and evil scheme aimed at securing a certain answer.

The devil was well aware that, had he *begun* by accusing God of lying or by attempting to cast doubt on God's word, neither Adam nor Eve would have believed him. Why should they?

No, that certainly was not a winner.<sup>19</sup>

Separately, the enemy would need to come up with a credible explanation and reason for God's warning, other, of course, than that of God's real and genuine concern for their well-being. If ever he were to persuade Adam and Eve that *they would not* die if they ate the fruit, then he would have to suggest a very plausible motive indeed for God being so insistent that *they would*.

## THE DEVIL – THE STRATEGY

It is hard to credit Satan's audacity but the plan on which he settled was to charge God both (i) with *being driven by his (the devil's) own motive* and (ii) with *using his (the devil's) own method*.

(i) By way of **motive**, he would accuse God of begrudging Adam and Eve that which was for their highest good.

(ii) By way of **method**, he would accuse God of deceit, of his very own sin. I say, 'his very own sin', because of our Lord's words to the Jews, 'You are of your father the devil', He said to the Jews, 'he was a murderer from the beginning and *abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it*'.<sup>20</sup>

### God's motive?

Satan decided, therefore, to portray God as motivated and driven by selfish jealousy, as determined to defend His own patch at all costs. He would paint a picture for Eve of a God who was stingy—of a God who was fearful, even paranoid, that others would climb up to His level and invade His own prized territory of the knowledge of good and evil.

Yes, it was just about plausible.

And, if he played it right, the devil would be able to take advantage of the fact that, although the Lord God had spoken in unmistakable terms of the *consequence* and the *effect* of transgression, He had offered not one word of *explanation* for the prohibition. And so, the serpent says, in effect, 'if **God** will not tell you, **I** will'.

### The tree of the knowledge of good and evil

You and I are able to grasp something of the reason for God's ban on eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (I am not suggesting that we comprehend all of it!)

When God created man, He deliberately chose *not* to make a creature who would worship and serve Him mechanically and mindlessly. Far from it! For God placed enormous value upon man's free and loving response of obedience and worship.

So much so that, though (being who He was) God knew in advance both of man's rebellion and sin and also of the tremendous cost to Himself and His Son of one day launching His great rescue mission, He still gave man the priceless gift of freedom—a will capable of making its own choices.

I remember our oldest grandson (now an adult), who, when he was five years of age, if told to do something which he didn't want to do, was in the habit of replying: 'I can't; I am a robot'. I recall that neither his mother nor his grandfather were particularly impressed with that argument – as that part of his anatomy which is incapable of facial expression soon discovered!

And God *could*, of course, had He so willed, have programmed a creature which would have always said 'No' to evil and 'Yes' to good. He *could* have programmed a creature which would have done His will, flawlessly and at all times. But what pleasure, we must ask, would that possibly have brought either to God or to His 'puppet'?

But, if obedience is to be loving, willing and free, there must, by definition, be the possibility of *disobedience*.<sup>21</sup> And so there needed to be, at the very least, some kind of probation—some test, if you like—by which man's obedience and devotion could be proved. Hence, 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' and God's forbidding man to eat from it.

But, if you and I, with hindsight, can grasp something of the reason for the prohibition against eating from the tree, neither Adam nor Eve was in a position to do that. The fact was that God had given them no reason for His 'command' (as it is described<sup>22</sup>) that they must not eat the fruit of the tree—and the serpent was only too ready to suggest one for Him!

### God's generosity

But the devil still faced a major hurdle. Frankly, the Lord God had been so good. Yes, it was true, there was one restriction but, were truth told, that restriction counted for nothing; it involved Adam and Eve in no great cost, loss or sacrifice.

For the Lord had provided the first pair with the most beautiful of all environments, namely, 'a garden' which He had designed and planted Himself.<sup>23</sup> As an aside, although I have no reason to suppose that Mary Magdalene ever realised it, the newly risen Lord to whom she spoke outside the sepulchre had indeed once been a 'gardener'!<sup>24</sup>

But the Lord God had not only 'planted' the garden, He had also provided the man and the woman with the amplest food supply imaginable. According to the closing section of chapter 1, 'God said, Behold, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food'.<sup>25</sup>

And, before He ever revealed the restriction which He placed on just the one tree, He had stressed, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat'.<sup>26</sup> That is, every tree was at their disposal. Adam and Eve were not limited as to the amount they could eat from any individual tree. Nor were they restricted to eating from only one tree; they were free to 'mix and match' as they wished.

How the devil surmounted this tricky hurdle we shall see in a moment.

## THE DEVIL – THE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTED

The devil decided to target the woman and to do it, if I understand the passage correctly, when she was alone.

But how was he to go about it?

### Eve – necessarily tempted from outside

Clearly, the temptation would need to come from outside of Eve, for neither she nor Adam then possessed a sinful nature like ours. They knew nothing yet of being tempted by their own desires, as envisaged by James: '... each is tempted when he is drawn away ('is lured') and enticed by his own lusts'.<sup>27</sup>

Ever since the Fall, man can be relied on to tempt himself and, from the evidence around us, he makes a very good job of it! But, in the case of Eve, the temptation would necessarily have to come from outside.

Yet clearly the devil could not assume a human form for this purpose because Eve was well aware that she and Adam were the only two human beings alive. Both of them had been fearfully and wonderfully made<sup>28</sup> and in each case, I note, from the most unlikely and unpromising materials—Adam from dust<sup>29</sup> and she from bone.<sup>30</sup>

At home, my wife and I throw out the bones and have been known on special occasions to sweep out the dust—although more often we preserve it, telling visitors they can touch it but asking them not to write in it!

Yet the Lord God had used these very materials to make both her husband and herself.

But Eve did not need to be told that He had made them only! Just one male and one female.

### A composite being

Satan was compelled, therefore, to work through another creature and, by definition, a relatively inferior creature. For reasons known only to himself, the devil chose as his instrument the 'serpent' – 'the snake' (the Hebrew word used in Genesis 3 being the most common Old Testament Hebrew word for a snake, occurring some 30 times in all).

Now, let us be clear. The devil did *not* simply *appear in the form* of a snake. This snake was not some apparition or phantom.

This was a real snake. Verse 1 clearly implies that the 'serpent' was made of similar stuff to the other 'beasts of the field'<sup>31</sup> and, according to verse 14, part of God's judgement on the serpent was that, henceforth, it should propel itself along on its belly – which clearly suggests, not only that it was a physical animal but also that, prior to the Fall, the snake stood erect.<sup>32</sup>

And so, when we read in Genesis 3 of 'the serpent', we are reading of what we must call a **composite being** – a physical animal but used as an instrument by the devil. For this reason, God's curse and judgement on the serpent relate, on the one hand, to the animal's form and posture, thereafter having to move on its belly,<sup>33</sup> but, on the other hand, to the sinister Overlord of Evil himself—having reference, not to his 'belly' but to his 'head' (destined one day to be 'bruised' (to be 'crushed') by the Seed of the woman.<sup>34</sup> It has been well said, 'if you want to know who bruised the head of the serpent, ask the man with the bruised heel!'



I am uncertain how to understand the word translated 'subtil' in the King James Version of verse 1. It is used with the meaning of 'shrewd' and 'prudent' in the book of Proverbs and with the meaning of 'crafty' and 'cunning' in the book of Job.<sup>35</sup> But in whatever way we understand the word, it is certainly not a suitable description for any ordinary animal. In some sense, therefore, the devil indwelt or 'possessed' the snake,<sup>36</sup> using the snake as his mouthpiece.<sup>37</sup> The scheme and the voice were undoubtedly Satan's.

### **The challenge**

But however was the serpent to induce Eve to entertain hard and harsh thoughts about God?

Somehow, he must take her eyes off the great bounty which God had lavished upon her and her husband and get her to focus rather on the one thing—the *only* thing—which the Lord God had denied them.

Somehow, he must get her to think in terms of the forbidden tree but without her realising that he was doing it.

### **The devilishly clever question**

Yes, there *was* a way ... just *one* way. It would require a carefully thought-out question; it called for a cleverly crafted question ... an apparently innocent and naïve question, seemingly asked out of mere curiosity.

What, then, if he began by putting some outrageous words into God's mouth ... by attributing to the Almighty some nonsensical statement which would leave the woman no choice but to correct it ... and, in so doing, lead *her* to draw attention to the divine prohibition *herself*?

What a masterstroke that would be, to prompt *her* to tell *him* about the fruit of the one tree which God had withheld from her and Adam.

And, to help her on her way, he would plant the idea in her mind by himself using the very words he wanted *her* to feed back<sup>38</sup> to him: 'you shall not eat'!

### **The risk**

Of course, his scheme involved a *high degree of risk*. Satan knew he would get no second chance. For, if his ploy failed, he would be unmasked—if not by Eve, then almost certainly by Adam, and, if not by Adam, then most certainly (and far, far worse) by the Lord God. Eve would never listen to him again.

Indeed, in any case, speaking through the mouth of an animal was itself risky and could well alert the woman to the fact that something mighty odd was going on, thereby arousing her suspicions.

For Eve doubtless knew that, before she ever came on the scene, Adam had failed to find any 'help' (or 'helper') to be his counterpart ... had failed to find any potential companion 'corresponding to' him.

Had he not stood alone (something which the Lord God saw as 'not good'<sup>39</sup>), isolated and without the possibility of fellowship with any of the beasts?

Yes, Adam could (and did) name them<sup>40</sup> but there was no evidence he could hold a conversation with any of them. No 'living creature' either thanked him for, or objected to, the name he gave it!

And a talking, reasoning snake did not really fit into the picture; the sudden arrival of one could easily alarm Eve. But then, as the devil knew, she *was* still in the process of discovering more and more about the fascinating world into which God had placed her.

And, in any case, what choice did he have?

### **A SECOND TALKING ANIMAL**

It is interesting to contrast the only other talking animal in the Bible.<sup>41</sup> I refer to Balaam's 'ass' ('donkey') in Numbers 22.

Here in Genesis 3, as a consequence of acting on the serpent's words, *our first parents' eyes* were opened, the damage by then having been done.<sup>42</sup> Whereas in Numbers 22, following the ass's speaking, we read that *Balaam's eyes* were opened (by the Lord), to avoid any damage being done.<sup>43</sup> And some damage it would have been!

For, at that moment, the angel of the Lord stood poised to part the prophet's hair with his sword! And when Balaam said to his donkey, 'I wish there were a sword in my hand',<sup>44</sup> my fertile imagination envisages the angel of the Lord replying, 'Oh! you want a sword do you? Perhaps you would like to connect with mine!'

The actions of the second speaking animal (Balaam's ass) served to save one man from certain death, whereas the actions of the first speaking animal (the serpent) served to introduce death into the entire human race.

### **AN OPPORTUNE TIME**

Then, so be it. His strategy decided, his plans drawn, the devil needed to wait for the right moment. And, for our part, we must wait for seven days before continuing with our study.

**To be concluded.**



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 12. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 3. 13. See also 2 Cor. 11. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. 20. 10.

<sup>4</sup> It is 48 times to be precise; 18 of which are in the Old Testament, with 14 being in the book of Job. The devil puts in only four public appearances in the Old Testament: to tempt Eve, Gen. 3. 1-5; to obtain permission to attack Job, Job 1-2; to tempt David, 1 Chron. 21. 1; and to accuse Joshua the high priest, Zech. 3. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 'The πονηρός is not content unless he is corrupting others as well, and drawing them into the same destruction with himself'.

(R. C. Trench, 'Synonyms of the New Testament', page 299.)

'In an active sense, evil which corrupts others ... malevolent, malignant'.

(Spiros Zodhiates, 'The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament', page 1198.)

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 13. 39; Luke 10. 19.

<sup>7</sup> 'The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ... and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever', Rev. 20. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Isa. 14. 12-15.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 25. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Romans 9. 22-23 reads, 'What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the *vessels of wrath prepared for destruction*, that He might make known the riches of His glory on the *vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory*'.

W. E. Vine comments that the first preparation 'is not imputed to God, as if God had prepared these vessels for wrath in contrast to those He had prepared for mercy. God has not created men with a view to their destruction ... The form of the word rendered "fitted" may be regarded as in the middle voice, which implies action done by oneself with a view to one's own aims and interests. There is a suggestion, therefore, that the persons referred to as "vessels of wrath" have fitted themselves for destruction, and this was actually the case with Pharaoh, as we have seen from Exodus. The apostle could have used a form of expression stating clearly that they had been fitted by an outward agency unto destruction. That form, however, is set aside in order to use one which throws the responsibility upon man for the hardness of his heart. God, then, has restrained His merited wrath ... What he says ... is that God has endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath who have fitted themselves unto destruction'.

(W. E. Vine, 'Commentary on Romans', comment on Rom. 9. 22; cf. Mr Vine's article, 'Fit. B. 3', in his 'Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words'.)

'Who, then, is the agent by which these vessels of wrath, these unbelieving Jews, are "prepared" for such destruction, whether temporal or eternal? The difference between the term used here in v. 22 and the comparable term in v. 23 ("he prepared in advance") makes it very likely ... that *they prepared themselves* for such destruction .... The verb in v. 23 is active and has the prefix *pro-*, and clearly means that God himself prepared in advance the vessels of mercy for glory. But in v. 22 the verb seems to be deliberately different. It is either passive voice: "they were prepared," or (more likely) middle voice: "they prepared themselves". I.e., they are responsible for their own destruction; by their sin and unbelief and refusal to repent, they sealed their own doom'.

(Jack Cottrell, 'College Press NIV Commentary on Romans', Volume 2, page 119.)

<sup>11</sup> Matt. 8. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Rev. 12. 12.

<sup>13</sup> Gen. 1. 28; cf. Gen. 2. 19-20a.

<sup>14</sup> Gen. 1. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Gen. 2. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Gen. 1. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Gen. 2. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Gen. 3. 1.

<sup>19</sup> And so, he leads with his insidious question, Gen. 3. 1. For, if God *had* said what the devil cleverly suggests, then how could He possibly be good. To distance Eve from God, Satan bores into her heart through doubt, intending to undermine her trust in God and His goodness.

<sup>20</sup> John 8. 44.

<sup>21</sup> To do what God desires merely because one cannot do otherwise has no moral value.

<sup>22</sup> Gen. 2. 16.

<sup>23</sup> 'The Lord God planted a garden ...', Gen. 2. 8.

<sup>24</sup> John 20. 15. 'In a semblance of the gardener, God walked again in the garden, in the cool not of the evening but the dawn'.  
(G. K. Chesterton, '*The Everlasting Man*', page 247.)

<sup>25</sup> Gen. 1. 29.

<sup>26</sup> Gen. 2. 16.

<sup>27</sup> James 1. 14.

<sup>28</sup> Psa. 139. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Gen. 2. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Gen. 2. 22.

<sup>31</sup> Gen. 3. 1; cf. Gen. 2. 19-20.

<sup>32</sup> See J. N. Darby, '*The Irrationalism of Infidelity*', Collected Writings, Volume 6, page 110.

<sup>33</sup> Gen. 3. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Gen. 3. 15.

<sup>35</sup> Subtil 'is an ambiguous term. On the one hand it is a virtue the wise should cultivate (Prov. 12. 16; 13. 16), but misused it becomes wiliness and guile (Job 5. 12; 15. 5; cf. Exod. 21. 14; Joshua 9. 4)'.  
(Gordon J. Wenham, '*Genesis: The Word Biblical Commentary*', page 72.)

Both the Hebrew and the Greek word can carry either meaning. 'The choice of the term מוֹרָע 'shrewd' here is one of the more obvious plays on words in the text; for the man and his wife have just been described as מֵרָע 'nude' (Gen. 2. 25). That is, they will seek themselves to be shrewd (cf. Gen. 3. 6) but will discover that they are 'nude' (Gen. 3. 7, 10)'.  
(Gordon J. Wenham, *loc. cit.*)

<sup>36</sup> Possibly, akin to the demons and the swine, Mark 5. 13..

<sup>37</sup> Here in 'the garden' of Gen. 3, Satan used a snake as his mouthpiece; since then he has used men; see 2 Cor. 11. 3-4; 1 Tim. 4. 1-2; cf. 2 Tim. 3. 13; Eph. 5. 6; Eph. 4. 14.

<sup>38</sup> An unintentional pun!

<sup>39</sup> Gen. 2. 18.

<sup>40</sup> Gen. 2. 19-20.

<sup>41</sup> 'It is instructive to note the various ways in which Balaam's story contrasts the actions of the proverbially dumb donkey with those of the proverbially wise snake [Matt. 10. 16]. Whereas the serpent's question misleads Eve about the nature of the world around her, the donkey's enlightens Balaam. Whereas the male serpent offers to open the woman's eyes, which leads to her death, the female donkey helps to open Balaam's eyes in order to save him from death (Num. 22. 33). And, whereas the serpent's trick causes man to be separated from Eden by angels and a fiery sword, the donkey's removes an angelic swordsman from Balaam's path'.

(James Bejon, *The Story of Balaam in Light of the Biblical Narrative*, page 20.)

'Numbers 22 and Genesis 3 are the only narratives in the entire Bible in which an animal communicates in human speech .... Neither creature offers any introductory comment to explain its verbal ability, and this talent is accepted unquestioningly by the human counterparts in the story. Indeed, the ease with which human and animal enter into dialogue contrasts sharply with the extraordinary nature of the interchange ... Both the ass and the snake use interrogatory statements to persuade the listener ... Both animals lead people astray, the snake figuratively and the ass literally. But while the snake's action results in the imposition of mortality, Balaam's ass saves the life of her master ... the image of an angel armed with a sword is common to both stories. In Gen. 3.24 angels are placed at the entrance to the garden to obstruct human passage, thereby preventing the attainment of eternal life. In this way they are guardians of immortality, but guarantors of death to humankind. The angel in Numbers 22 is sent by God to frustrate Balaam's journey to Balak, and is clearly menacing to both Balaam and to the she-ass, but he represents a temporary danger rather than a permanent deterrent ... This provisional threat to Balaam's life is turned to a more positive purpose: to prevent harm from being done to Israel in the form of curse, and ultimately to guarantee life to Israel in the form of blessing'.

(George Savran, '*Beastly Speech*', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 64 (1994), pages 36-45.)

<sup>42</sup> Gen. 3. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Num. 22. 31.

<sup>44</sup> Num. 22. 29.