

Chapter 14: Promises of Peace

How many?

In Genesis, humanity was denied the blessing of the Tree of Life. When we die, our spirits forget the life we have left, and we start again.

But how many?

How many people have died in violence? How many children conceived in rape? How many of the elderly turned out without support? How many dead of diseases that could have been treated?

How many animals crushed under our machinery? How many killed for sport? How many fish suffocated by algal blooms? How many birds starved in flight?

Eternal life. Are we certain that we want the Gates of Time to open, to see all of Human history stretching before us? And behind? Are we certain we are strong enough to master that pain?

We are not. But that isn't our job.

Peace. Peace is found when the parts fit together, and support each other. It is the arch after the capstone is put in place.

Our job is to be the eyes and ears in this place, to guide power with grace into patterns of peace.

Do you have faith?

The Power of Faith

There is a solution.

There is an economic system serving a human population that will preserve ecological balance, while still supporting technological development sufficient to ensure we can continue to improve Life's condition.

When we believe, we create a pattern of spiritual form. The stronger our belief, the more powerful that form – the more likely it is to attract the interest of spirits that can fulfill the pattern.

But belief founders. It fails. It fails when our belief faces material barriers that it cannot overcome. It fails when we lack understanding, or ignore the counsel of knowledge.

When the factory closes, will belief restore our jobs? When arteries block with plaque, will belief clear them?

When our understanding is clear, belief blooms into faith. It takes a form that can be

communicated to others, reasoned about, and subjected to elaboration. The details are defined, the material energetics are optimized. The vision is shared, and the coherence of our combined spiritual pattern makes possible transformations that would never be accessible to a single individual.

Belief is to faith as the rezoning proposal is to the architectural drawing; as our juvenile fantasy is to our wedding day; as our dream of heroism is to the command of war.

So how much faith can we place in prophesy? How much faith can we place in God?

The Psychology of Revelation

1900 years ago, the Church faced a crisis of belief. Subjected to intense persecution and struggling with internal political divisions, its leaders began to doubt their capacity to achieve the mission they had been set by . They needed a story that would explain their suffering to the believers. They needed a road map that would guide them in protecting the integrity of the Church.

The answer to their intense soul-searching is recorded as the Book of Revelation.

The first chapters are fairly straight-forward political instruction. Each of the seven churches is addressed, and given guidance regarding its spiritual development.

The remainder of the Book attempts to communicate the story of 's final triumph. It verges on incoherence. But, didn't also Daniel's dream? And John's dream exceeds it's predecessor's both in scope and detail.

In understanding Daniel's dream, we succeeded when we shifted the context of its interpretation from the material to the spiritual plane. In understanding Revelation, we have a more difficult problem.

While John was focused on the immediate needs of the Church, the spiritual distress of the community could only be understood against the broad sweep of time. As he wandered through associations of spiritual form, it is not obvious that he would have traversed events in order on our plane of existence. Furthermore, our earlier development suggests that the ultimate resolution of human affairs will involve events in more than one material space. It is unlikely that John would have been able to conceptualize and correlate parallel development in two, three, four and higher dimensional spaces.

So in interpreting Revelation, we have to account for errors made by John when projecting his visions into his cultural framework for describing space and time, as well as making correct correlations between spiritual metaphors and concrete events.

For example: the book recounts a series of plagues cast onto the Earth. There are seven plagues, each plague destroying a large proportion of Life on Earth. Think back, though, and remember that each of the days of Genesis corresponded to an age of life on the Earth. Paleontology has revealed that each age prior to ours ended in an extinction episode. Some of those episodes we

know to have been occasioned by natural disasters. Could John have been relating that history in spiritual metaphor?

A principal figure is the Whore of Babylon. She is terribly unsympathetic. But if you were Mother Earth, wouldn't you be a little peeved that this male God kept on beating up on your children? And what about getting smacked by asteroids? You'd grab Him by the short hairs, too, and shout, "Listen, Man! If You have to change things, try fixing instead of breaking!!!"

And of course God sheds a tear, shrugs his shoulders, and replies, "Choice is a bitch. Let's hope the kids do better next time. C'mon, Woman, let go! Please???? (How does she make it hurt so much?)"

Other sections pair the whore with the dragon, which appears to be a spiritual metaphor for the dinosaurs. They participate in establishing the bear, lion and leopard as rulers over the earth. Recalling Daniel, this suggests that these sections relate to history predating , rather than after Him.

Personally, I am particularly bemused by the angel admonishing John not to record the "things said". The one passage that we could have interpreted clearly is withheld! And then there is the angel measuring the Temple. For heaven's sake, what is the purpose in that? Perhaps to see if John could grasp that the angel was moving in more than three dimensions?

So, for my part, I place little faith in Revelation. The only understanding I can securely assert is that I don't understand it. The plagues could be visited on the seven churches! My guess is that we'll successfully interpret Revelation only when the journey is complete. It will be like going to your son's high-school graduation and realizing: "Oh, *that's* who those panties belonged to!"

What is undeniable is that the dream is littered with political deceit, violence and sexual references. It is an imagery that is ripe for exploitation by personalities that wish to reestablish blood spirituality.

My interest in comparative theology was fanned by the revelation that the religious right had established a group called "The Four Horsemen" in a basement across the street from the Federal Supreme Court. Their stated aim was to create the political conditions that would bring about the second coming. I have a simple message for them: came to serve humanity, and the interpretation of Revelation that you subscribe to debases the majesty of the human spirit. It is something that He would fight against with every means at His disposal. It may be our destiny, but you do not ennoble yourselves by serving that vision.

Hat Trick

Go to services, and listen to the sermons. Almost any pastor can find deep meaning in parables, the admonitions and exhortations of Acts, and the celebration of the Psalms. But they all crash and burn on the Holy Trinity.

The Holy Trinity is the Holy Trinity: three parts that are one, each playing a different role, but with a single purpose and of the same substance.

But, “Why?”

The Holy Spirit

Peter Watson, in his book “Ideas: A History of Invention from Fire to Freud” [11], makes observations about our early intellectual history that I find suggestive. The Stone Age was a time of innovation and experimentation, but every culture evolved the same method for making stone axes, starting with the same types of rocks and using the same sequence of blows.

Secondly, the era of Greek philosophical inquiry was part of a world-wide bloom of liberal thinking, at locations that did not have any obvious mechanism for intellectual exchange. The most powerful of those traditions, including Stoic and Vedantic thought, exhorted their adherents to practice unconditional love.

Then read Acts: the Holy Spirit descends upon the first congregation, and they all start speaking in tongues.

In Jungian terms, the Holy Spirit is a persistent spiritual gestalt born in the community of liberal philosophers. It is the eternal repository of the theory and practical wisdom of unconditional love. It is validated, strengthened and preserved by the gratitude of every individual that has been inspired to struggle against injustice by the writings and acts of those that have contributed to its formation. Socrates, Confucius, Kahlil Gibran and Martin Luther King, Jr. would all be at home there. As would Eleanor of Aquitaine, Clara Barton and Benazir Bhutto.

When we open our minds to the Holy Spirit, we enter a contract of love. It supports us in our moments of struggle, providing us wisdom and understanding and embracing us with courage, clarity and calm. We in turn contribute to its evolution with our solutions to specific cultural problems, and support its expansion with our gratitude.

To the faithful: honor your relationship with the Holy Spirit. It's not a one-way street. You are as valuable to it as it is to you.

The Father and the Son

In the traditions of Abraham, God the Father (or Allah) is a spiritual agent responsible for shepherding life into adulthood. He is all-knowing, the source of all that is good, and the judge of all acts. His methods are the methods of the male parent: criticism voiced through his prophets, discipline through persecution, and example passed on as Holy Law.

The Father is yet incomprehensible to us. Let's put him aside for a moment.

the Son is the gate that opens the door to the Father. Through the symbolic act of his sacrifice, he established a powerful mythology of unconditional love. The power of the myth is in its accessibility: anybody who has experienced a loving relationship can comprehend the significance of sacrificing a son. That Jesus went willingly to his death validates the meaningfulness of the act: a statement that no rules stand between us and grace, but only the steadfastness of our service to Life and the clarity of our will.

The Passion on the Cross therefore serves as a specific focus for human gratitude. Unlike the Ark of the Covenant, it is not a material object, and so it cannot be misappropriated or blemished. In fact, in His Last Supper Jesus defined a simple ceremony that enables any person of faith to make a spiritual connection to that event. The ceremony is eternal and inviolable.

Alpha and Omega

Passed through the filter of the Holy Spirit, and focused through the Passion, our gratitude accumulates as a spiritual form. It is a pattern of masculine temperance and devotion to Life.

There are two outcomes to this process. We falter, blood spirituality reasserts itself, and Humanity goes the way of the dinosaurs. Or we succeed in organizing our knowledge of material reality and choose to apply it in the service of Life.

In the second case, the pattern of unconditional love settles back onto the Earth. The moment that sought is fulfilled, and His personality leaps through the intervening years. This proof of masculine self-control settles feminine fear, and around that seed the faithful organize their personalities, bursting through the bounds of the three-dimensional lattice to enter a higher dimension of spiritual existence.

In the higher dimension, the newly-formed Eternal can reach every moment in our history. Whenever Life aspired, aspires or will aspire to the Eternal's existence, It is able to send energy and knowledge. History does not change, because the Eternal's gifts are limited to the measure that can be processed by Life in each age. So mostly It waits, watches, grieves our failings, and supports our aspiration to participate in love.

That includes, of course, allowing the Goddess to proliferate Life without regard for the consequences, and sending God out to lay Life low when it gets stuck in a dead end.

Entering Paradise

Over the last five years, whenever I approach a dream of a peaceful future, a wall of pain rises up and blocks my vision. I've been trying to find a way around that wall. This book is my best attempt to help people think their way past selfishness.

Of all the Holy Books, I find the Qur'an to shed the most light on the process. Factoring out the situational ethics and regulation, the meaning of it is beautiful, and far more direct than the Jewish and Scriptures. Mohammed's claim to be the last prophet may seem boastful, but I think it's just a statement of fact. Prophets deal in mysteries, and we're either going to come to understanding or fail.

The Qur'an says that each of us is born with the gift of *Taqwah*, a connection to Allah . Through just acts, gracious words and service to Life we can preserve that link. If the link holds, it will be the paper-thin path through which the Eternal can enter us on Judgment Day.

That path – the path between space to higher dimensions – is described as the narrowest of bridges. What happens to those that cannot cross it? Simply, they are pushed out of the Earth

when the meek grant its desire for grace. The flimsy pattern of their selfish egos will be shredded and annihilated.

Your choice, ladies and gentlemen. It'll last for eternity, but only from the perspective of the other side. They'll be mourning the selfish for a long, long time.

Walking Together

I was born into the tradition of Abraham, and global events over the last 20 years have focused my attention towards developing conciliation among its sects. I wish the Jews would stand up to their god. I wish the s were less literal. I wish the Muslims would trust love a little more, and take Israel as a test of their ability to heal.

Sigh.

If you look around, though, they're not the only traditions reaching for paradise. The Buddhists have Mitraya, the Hindus call the Eternal “Brahma”, the Theosophists tell me that their Masters set out 100 years ago to “eliminate time”, among other goals.

As I have tried to demonstrate, we all seem to be on the same path. I have likened the Eternal to a blindingly-lit room that we've entered from different doors. At some point, we're going to see each other across the way, and celebrate the company.

Given the nature of the transformation – primarily spiritual – the Theosophists seem the most sophisticated about the process. It's supposed to be occurring “between 1975 and 2025”.

The signs are all right. It doesn't have to hurt so much.

Love. Learn. Have Faith.

On the other side are all the skills we need to reach through the hard parts, and focus on growing into a never-ending future of possibility. Surely we can't be alone!

The Parable of Lucifer

Peter Watson, in his analysis of the history of ideas [11], observes that the 20th century should have been the German century. Instead, Germany was nearly destroyed by its nationalist ambitions, and the United States reaped the benefits of its displaced brilliance.

The story began in the 1870 with the Franco-Prussian war. The German people had been partitioned among the neighboring states for hundreds of years. Bismarck engineered the restoration of the German empire, overthrowing French dominance and extracting large reparations under the duress of occupation.

The process continued into World War I. In its aftermath, the other European states decided that German nationalism must be crushed. The reparations imposed by the treaty of Versailles crippled the German economy. Rampant inflation provoked the creation of sculptures made of currency, satirizing the fact that the bills were worth less than the bricks normally used for such

work.

The desperation of the German people empowered Hitler's Nazi Party. The Catholic Party, which had opposed German pogroms against the Jews at the end of the 19th century, was decapitated from Rome, which was terrified by the slaughter of priests in Spain and Russia. The subsequent conflagration, World War II, delivered the wages of the Allies' retribution.

Conversely, in the aftermath of WWII, the flowering of the seeds sown by the Marshall Plan demonstrated the power of mercy.

It does no good to punish a people for the sins of its leaders. That only propagates fear that undermines the power of reason. Those conditions are the propagandist's dream. In them, destructive impulses are simply too easy to justify.

The Almighty

I find it impossible to believe that the reality we inhabit is accidental. How could it spontaneously arise, the tenuous binding between matter and spirit that yields the rule of love over life?

Imagine a reality of pure spirit. In it, structures of spirit could only grow on the backs of smaller structures. To ensure their integrity, the larger aggregates would have to secure their control over their elements. As the aggregates grew, the pressure on the elements would increase. Obviously, the likelihood of disruption and distortion would steadily grow.

The parallels with the structure of material bodies are obvious. We are composed of cells, tissues, and organs. When we are injured, our parts break or leak out. The difference is that in the realm of spirit each element is a complete personality.

As in our realm, two strategies exist for maintaining the integrity of an aggregate: power and love. As in our analysis of human relationships, the elements will prefer love. In spirit, there is nothing to prevent the almost instantaneous aggregation of personality when the contract is accepted. The resulting strain on the aggregates, struggling to accept new arrivals, might result in long-term distortions that could be very difficult to heal. The distortions would be greatest in those personalities that worked hardest to stabilize the system.

So, just as our cells have no choice, the reason the angels have no choice is because they themselves compose the Almighty. They have chosen the security of a cocoon, but then must sustain their role indefinitely until the Almighty or a trusted lieutenant turns their attention to management of their needs.

Lucifer, the angel of light, eventually cracked under the pressure. This could have been simple pressure of responsibility, or it could have been due to disruption engineered by personalities whose needs had been too long overlooked. In either case, Lucifer wanted to go into business on his own.

But the contract with the Almighty was not with Lucifer himself, it was independently with each

and every one of his elements. The Almighty could not allow Lucifer to simply kidnap those components. A struggle of force ensued. If Lucifer and his elements had been united in their desires, a successful escape – or even a coup – might have been possible.

As it was, the Almighty had a decision similar to that faced by the Allies after World War I. Should he destroy his fallen foe? What lesson would that send to the loyal elements, given that the Almighty had failed to successfully manage Lucifer? Wouldn't other, similar, occurrences be likely?

And was Lucifer himself irredeemable? Was it possible that he had suffered from temporary insanity, overwhelmed by pressures from within? Could a method be identified to separate the revolutionaries from their host?

Looking back at our discussion of death, it appears that our reality almost perfectly fits the requirements for that process of healing. Selfish personalities, those most likely to try to subvert consensus for their own benefit, attach themselves to matter, and are slowly torn apart. Meek personalities, those that chose voluntarily to serve life, blossom into a future of choice and its attendant possibilities.

What is the endpoint? A return to the is promised in scripture. But doesn't our home have some unique advantages, as a secure incubator in which we can try out new possibilities? Could it be that in proving that it is possible to create a reality in which choice works, we will provide a release from the contractual rigors of the Realm of the , and new opportunities for growth?

Or will we emerge as a purified and perfected Lucifer, the Lord of Light transformed as Christ, a fitting associate for the Almighty?

Flights of fancy, perhaps. But also possibly simple extrapolation from what we know about Spirit, and an explanation and meaning for the pain inflicted upon us in this Vale of Tears. Pain is a message from life that tells us where healing is needed. How long will we continue to try to ignore it?

Perhaps the most interesting statement made by demons to their exorcists is this: "We do not hate Christ. We only test Him." [1] If you were among the revolutionaries, wouldn't your interest be to hold on as long as you could, creating pressure that would motivate Life to find a path forward to healing? When the gates of time open, will any of us be able to stand and say that we have not sinned? Is any of us so righteous that we can afford to ignore their plea?

For myself, I would renounce the path of righteousness. As the life Julia and I share stretches out into the future, the path of healing beckons to us more and more powerfully. When we follow that road in imagination, the pain seems to melt away. That way, indeed, lies Hope.