

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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### True Spirituality and *Christianity Today* (Part 3)

**J**oanna Quintrell claims that God took control of her and gave her a totally *NEW* revelation. “God is full of surprises,” she writes. “It was early 2003, Dan Beach and I were each going about the things we normally do, serving as pastors on the staff of a church in Santa Rosa, California. What we didn’t know was that God was working in each of us separately, to both revolutionize our personal spiritual journeys AND to birth something *new* that He wanted to do here in Sonoma County. So here we sat in Applebee’s restaurant, staring at each other over lunch...stunned and surprised by what had just happened. I had described to Dan how I had been on a quiet retreat when I had sensed God saying that He wanted to tell me about something *new* He was going to do. I had written it all down, including the name (The Journey Center) and the fact that some day we would have our own building. As I shared with Dan the details of what the Journey Center would offer, and my own sense of puzzlement about what this all meant. I realized that he had a very unusual look on his face. When I finished my story, he said (very slowly), ‘Joanna...God has been giving me EXACTLY the same vision for several months, including the part about the building!’ I can just see God smiling as it dawned on us that He was up to something beyond what either of us could have previously imagined! It was clear to both of us that we weren’t to run out and try to make this all happen, but instead we were to wait prayerfully as God unfolded it. And that is exactly what He has done over the past 6 years. One step at a time and one resource at a time, the vision has been becoming a reality. Each resource we are enabled to offer is an expression of the loving heart of God for the spiritually thirsty, the struggling traveler, the lonely wanderer, the adventurous child, the joyful heart...whoever we are, and wherever we find ourselves on the journey.”<sup>1</sup>

Quintrell candidly admits that God spoke to her in such a way, that she was completely under the control of the voice. This is known as *automatic writing* and is connected, with good reason, to the Occult. It is a form of mediumship in which entities from other planes of existence, send messages by possessing people and making their hands write/or type whatever they choose in order to get their message across to the living.<sup>2</sup> The *New* revelation that Quintrell claimed God gave her reinforced what she already believed, i.e., New Age Spirituality with all its Eastern influences is perfectly compatible with Christianity. In fact, it can help people achieve a *Christ Consciousness* as a means to psychological wholeness and well-being. Christ is the great healer who brings this about. Nothing about sin, repentance, justification by faith or God’s holiness is part of this *New* revelation. Everything is focused on personal tranquility and the therapeutic means to achieve it.

The great Puritan theologian, John Owen, saw clearly the great danger of false doctrine and how susceptible we are, like Joanna Quintrell, to being deceived. “This I am compelled to say, that unless the Lord, in his infinite mercy, lay an awe upon the hearts of men, to keep them in some captivity to the simplicity and mystery of the gospel who now strive every day to exceed one another in novel opinions and philosophical apprehensions of the things of God, I cannot but fear that this soul-destroying abomination will one day break in as a flood upon us.”<sup>3</sup>

#### I. WHERE IT ALL BEGAN: THE GARDEN, THE TEMPTER AND THE FALL.

The Fall is a reminder, first of all, that sin began in Heaven among the angels. It came into our human existence only through this fallen angel, Satan, the great tempter. This creature, also called the *devil*, is specifically mentioned in the Bible with great purpose, more than one hundred and forty times. The word DAIMON means one that is wise and skillful. It signifies crafty. Other names such as Accuser, ANTIDIKOS, a legal term denoting an adversary at law. One who brings changes. Adversary, DIABOLOS, a slanderer or calumniator. Angel of the Bottomless Pit, Angel of Light, Apollyon, Belial, Beelzebub, Dragon, Evil One, Father of Lies, god of this world or age, Murderer, Ruler of Demons, Ruler of the Power of the Air, Ruler of this World, Ruler of Darkness, Satan, Serpent, Tempter and Wicked One. There are also three primary Old Testament passages which identify Satan as an angelic being (I Chr. 21:1; Job 1-2, and Zec. 3:1). He got at Adam through Eve, and he got at Eve through deception. The attack on Adam was not frontal. It was devious.

I regard the account as historical, not mythological. The language is that of historical narrative, and the preceding and following contexts are historical in nature (cf. Isa. 43:27; Hos. 6:7). The New Testament regards the chapter as historical, too (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:14, etc.). The mythological accounts of the Near East, Greece, and Rome are products of what Hodge called “rude speculation.”<sup>4</sup> They are memories of the real thing in Genesis three. And contrary to even some self-professed *Evangelical* scholars, the serpent was real, too, not the symbol of evil, or erring reason, or sexual desire.<sup>5</sup> “The abandonment of the historicity of Paradise and the fall of Adam and Eve into sin repeatedly proves to have far-reaching consequences for various aspects of the dogmatics. Without pursuing all facets of this issue, we wish to point out that Adam does appear in genealogies as a historical person (Gen. 5:1, 3-5; 1 Chron. 1:1; Luke 3:38). Adam’s name turns up in other places as well (Gen. 4:25; Job 31:33; Hos. 6:7). The basis of Jesus’ reference to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 (in Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-8) is the historicity of Adam as the first human being. See further 1 Timothy 2:13. These references perfectly agree with the passages in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 referred to above.”<sup>6</sup> Satan, as noted, is set forth in the Bible by the use of other animal figures. He is the dragon because he is the slaughterer of the saints (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), and he is like a roaring lion (I Pet. 5:8) in his cruel and voracious appetite for fallen saints. His supernatural craftiness is here stressed, and he turns the serpent’s natural wisdom to his own advantage. He listened carefully as Adam named the animals! cf. Matt. 10:16. It is interesting in this connection to remember that Satan is also referred to in Scripture as “an angel of light” (cf. 2 Cor. 11:14). He did not, however, tempt the man and woman in that disguise. God apparently would not permit this, for a celestial being might have been too much for the man. God in this indicated that He did not intend to force the man and woman into evil. So, Satan came through a creature, a dependent animal, so that Adam would have not an excuse for permitting a mere animal to seduce them into disobedience of the divine Word.

#### A. SATAN’S CHRONIC QUESTION.

“Did God actually tell you not to eat of any of the trees in the garden?” (Gen. 3:1b). In the tempter’s opening word he challenged the stipulations of God’s covenant law. This insinuating question of fact was designed to undermine respect for God’s authority. Explicitly he asked about the extent of God’s prohibition, yet in such a way as to suggest the possibility that God’s prohibition might be too extensive (so calling into question too God’s goodness). Implicit in such a question was the assumption that a creature has the right to make an autonomous judgment about God. It therefore amounted to a denial of God’s absolute right of command and his absolute lordship and so struck at the very foundations of the covenant order.<sup>7</sup>

The Steps in the “subtlety.”

- (1) First, Satan questions the Word (vv. 1-3), cf. Matt. 4:1-4. He does not begin with a point-blank denial of the Word of God. Nor, in fact, do contemporary unbelieving theologians. He aims his “yea’s” and “if’s” at the Father’s honor. How can God have a creature made in His own image who is restrained from full freedom in the Garden? “Thus,” writes Candlish, ‘first, he insinuates doubts regarding the equity and goodness of God:-- “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (ver. 1). Can it be? Has he really subjected you to so unreasonable a

restraint?”<sup>8</sup> In other words, his question is very trickily worded, and to debate with him will involve dialogue with him. Already he will have the woman distrusting her Creator and doubting the truthfulness of His Word. Unbelief is his goal.

The woman reveals in her answer that she is beginning to think of her God in less than completely trustful senses. She adds some words to the prohibition of 2:16-17, “or touch it.” As far as the text of chapter two is concerned, there is not evidence that God said these words. Her very exaggeration of the prohibition is indicative of the fact that she is beginning to think of God’s simple test as stringent and hard (and unfair?). Her confidence toward God is wavering. Doubting His Word is the very essence of sin, and Eve is on the way to a disastrous fall.

- (2) Second, Satan contradicts the Word (v. 4). Here is the first lie, and it is a direct assault on her faith. It is not really a matter of life and death, trust in God’s Word, he claims. “You shall not surely die!” is his thrust to the woman, designed to pierce her heart through to the death of her soul. And his word is very emphatic, and it may be rendered, *you will positively NOT die*. The Hebrew is very emphatic. The negative is placed before the infinitive, “You shall not surely die [*lō’-môt ʿmūtûn*]. The construction of the Hebrew stresses the boldness of this denial: “not—you shall surely die.” In the normal construction the negative would precede the finite verb, but here it is simply placed in front of the entire construction. What was at first a question about the prohibition now became a denial of the consequence of disobedience.<sup>9</sup> This lie is the blackest of human history, and it will ultimately slay all the sons of men, including the One who will have to die for the redemption of the saints. It was aimed at genocide and, unwittingly, theocide!
- (3) Third, Satan maligns the Author of the Word (v. 5). He gives as the reason why they shall not die, “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” After thus making void the threatening of God, the tempter proceeds to substitute a blessing of his own in its stead. His promise begins with the very words of the Divine denunciation: “In the day ye eat thereof,” compared with “In the day thou eatest thereof,” (Gen. 2:17) but the continuation and the conclusion fully attest it to be the promise of the devil, “Then your eyes shall be opened” is the usual term for opening the eyes, or of giving sight to the blind, (Isa. 35:5) and then figuratively applied to the act of raising one above his usual short-sightedness, or disclosing to him an object of which he was previously unconscious, (Gen. 26:19). So also, the *blinding of the eyes* is an image of stupidity—an indisposition to perceive or understand the truth (Isa. 6:10). “Opening the eyes” is here a promise of advancement from their low and limited condition under the law of their Creator, to a more correct and enlarged apprehension of things, and to such a degree that they should feel as if hitherto they had been walking about with eyes *closed* to the beauties and pleasures around them and within their reach. The promised blessing is farther explained, and placed in a still more attractive light by the intimation, “Ye shall be as God,” *like Elohim*. The promise is, that they shall resemble the Supreme God, their Creator and Governor; and this is farther amplified or illustrated by the assurance of their being put in possession of the knowledge of good and evil, that is, being made to participate in the *fullness* of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Now we see why the Lord Jesus called Satan the father of lies (cf. John 8:44). God said, “you shall surely die” (cf. 2:17), but Satan says, “You surely shall not die!” (cf. 3:4).

**CONCLUSION:** We see here, as the Old Puritan preacher Richard Gilpin noted, the first seeds of atheism. “Through the working of Satan *the minds of men are darkened, and the light thereof put out by the prevalency of atheistical principles*. Something of atheism is by most divines concluded to be in every sin, and according to the height of it in its various degrees, is reason and consideration overturned. There are, it may be, few that are professed atheists in opinion, and dogmatically so, but all wicked men are so in practice. Though they profess God, yet ‘the fool saith in his heart, There is no God,’ [Ps. liii. 1.] and in ‘their works they deny him,’ [Titus i. 16.] This is a principle that directly strikes at the root: for if there be no God, no hell or punishment, who will be scared from taking his delight in sin by any such consideration? The devil, therefore, strives to instill this poison with his temptation. When he enticed Eve by secret insinuations, he first questions the truth of the threatening, and then proceeds to an open denial of it, ‘ye

shall not surely die;’ and it is plain she was induced to the sin upon a secret disbelief of the danger. She reckons up the advantages, ‘good for food, pleasant to the eye, to be desired to make one wise;’ wherein it is evident she believed what Satan had affirmed, ‘that they should be as God,’ and then it was not to be feared that they should die. This kind of atheism is common. Men may not disbelieve a Godhead; nay, they may believe there is a God, and yet question the truth of his threatenings.”<sup>11</sup>

Joanna Quintrell was thrilled to learn that God’s new message reaffirmed her own beliefs about psychological well-being and emotional healing could be achieved with the help of this *new spirituality* and *Christ Consciousness*. But who would want people to believe that this is really a new revelation from God? Listen again to the wisdom of Gilpin, “Satan knows that peace is the thing to which a man sacrificeth all his labours and travail. This he seeks, though often in a wrong way, and by wrong means. He knows also that true peace is only the daughter of truth, ‘the ways whereof are pleasantness, and the paths whereof are peace;’ neither is he ignorant of the delights which a man hath, by enjoying himself in the sweet repose of a contented mind, that he may charm the hearts of the erroneous into a confidence and assurance that they have taken a right course; he doth all he can to further a false peace in them... In order to the keeping out the light from the consciences of men, he insinuates himself *as a lying spirit into the mouths of some of his mercenaries*; and they speak ‘smooth things’ and deceit to Satan’s captives, telling them that they are in a good condition, Christians good enough, and may go to heaven as well as the precisest. It is a fault in unfaithful ministers, they do the devil this service. God highly complains of it: Jer. vi. 14, ‘They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace peace; when there is no peace;’ Ezek. xiii. 10, ‘They have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and others daubed it with untempered mortar.’ Besides, this stratagem is the more likely to prevail, because it takes the advantage of the humours and inclinations of men, who naturally think the best of themselves, and delight that others should speak what they would have them; so that when men by the devil’s instigation prophesy deceit to sinful men, it is most likely they should be heard, seeing they desire such prophets, ‘and love to have it so.’”<sup>12</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.journeycenter.org/aboutStory.php>.

<sup>2</sup> For details see <http://psiknowledge.tripod.com/psi/id12.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *The Words of John Owen XII* (rpt. The Banner of Truth, 1973) p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology II* (rpt. Eerdmans, 1952) p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> I have in mind individuals like Peter Enns (who was dismissed from the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary for his views on Genesis being composed of myths) and the highly acclaimed Anglican Bishop N. T. Wright cf. N. T. Wright on Adam and Eve, <http://biologos.org/resources/nt-wright-on-adam-and-eve/>.

<sup>6</sup> J. V. Genderen and W. H. Velema, *Concise Reformed Dogmatics* (P & R, 2008) p. 388.

<sup>7</sup> M. G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations For A Covenantal Worldview* (Two Age Press, 2000) p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> R. S. Candlish, *Studies In Genesis* (rpt. Kregel, 1979) p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> A. P. Ross, *A Guide To The Study An Exposition of Genesis* (Baker, 1988) p. 135.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. D. MacDonald, *The Biblical Doctrine of Creation and the Fall* (rpt. Klock & Klock, 19984) p. 400.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Gilpin, *Daemonologia Sacra; or A Treatise of Satan’s Temptations* (rpt. Soli Deo Gloria Publications 2000) p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> Gilpin, p. 181 and 87