

God created Adam with a "failure chip"

While you won't find the phrase, "failure chip" in the book of Genesis to explain what happened to Adam, those with anointed eyes will find an identical principle in 1 Corinthians 15:45-46:

"If there is a soulish body, there is a spiritual also. Thus it is written: the first man, Adam, 'became a living soul;' the last Adam a vivifying Spirit. But not first the spiritual, but the soulish, thereupon the spiritual."

The soul is the senses and the emotions. It is obvious from the above that the soul opposes the spirit. That we are ruled chiefly by our souls is what gets us into trouble in the sin department; things like chocolate and sex and sport



convertibles look really good to us. Spiritual bodies won't have this problem. Soulsh bodies, however, are one temptation away from failure. The big revelation is: *God created Adam soulsh*. This was not an experiment, but a guarantee of temptation and sin. God didn't sin when He did this because He *meant* it to happen. If God wanted Adam perfect, He would have created Him spiritual first. God not only created Adam soulsh first, He created him soulsh and then called His creation, "very good" (Gen. 1:31).

Human failure is the only possible backdrop for a revelation of divine ability. God created Adam to fail so that He might assure creation of a revelation of Christ. ■

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

Satan really wants to do you a big favor

Poor Peter. He was only trying to help. Jesus had begun predicting His death to His disciples, telling them that He must be going to Jerusalem and be suffering from the elders and the chief priests, and eventually be killed. He also said He would be raised from the dead, but Peter didn't quite hear that part. He called Jesus Christ aside (imagine calling the Creator of the Universe aside) to have a word with Him. The following is from the J.B. Phillips paraphrase:

"God bless you, Master! Nothing like this must happen to you!"

Wasn't that thoughtful of Peter? I'll say. It was a human emotion. Who wouldn't want to keep a loved one from such a terrible fate as described by Jesus? Was Jesus impressed? Let's check:

Then Jesus turned round and said to Peter, "Out of my way, Satan! ... you stand right in my path, Peter, when you look at things from man's point of view and not from God's."

Man's point of view almost always sees things according to short term advantage. This is why we generally want what we want, when we want it. And if we are good people, we also want things for other people, when we want them to have it. This is a fine trait, until it opposes the desires of God. What are the desires of God? Jesus told Peter, but Peter didn't believe Him. Saving his Master a painful death was not part of the divine agenda. Peter's Master needed to die in order to save the world from its sins. Peter doubted that suffering and death could bring such a blessing.

We know better. And yet, in spite of this, we still—most of the time—consider all suffering and death as evidence that the world is in chaos and that God is asleep. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Our Lord called Peter "Satan" for thinking such a thing, and our minds are still at work trying to convince us that only good things are of God, and that all the things we deem evil are of Satan. By believing this way, we fall into the snare of the same Adversary who tricked Peter and inspired Jesus' rebuke.

The book of Revelation does not need to happen. For God's sake, let's all just get along.



How is this for counterintuitive: It was Peter's desire to *save* Jesus from pain and suffering—and his wish for Him to enjoy a long, healthy life—that was of Satan. And it was the suffering and death of Christ—at the hands of godless men—that was of God.

Do we often have things backwards? Yep.

Little of the evil in the world makes sense to us. Who can blame us for griping? Can we blame Peter for trying to rescue Christ? I'm tempted to give him a break until I remember that Jesus had prophesied His death and resurrection. In light of that, Peter *is* to blame. Peter looked the evidence in the face and said, "No, I don't think so." We must be careful to avoid the same mistake. The book of Revelation tells us that the worst times Earth has ever witnessed are ahead. Will we pray the world out of it?

In light of Christ's prophecy, Peter *is* to blame.

All evil eventually leads to good, however. God is the only One Who can do this. He created evil (Isaiah 45:7), to provide the contrast for good. When all good is revealed, then evil is abolished from God's universe—forever.

This is God's point of view, not man's. The worst is ahead, but so is the best. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. ■

Saving Hitler is practice for saving Paul

In 1 Timothy 1:15, the apostle Paul explains the work of Christ in nine simple words:

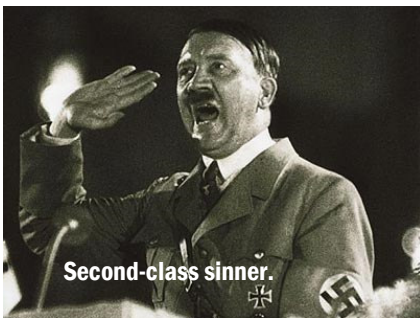
“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

It’s hard to imagine how anything could be explained much more simply. Those of us who grasp the full value of the blood of Christ have the audacity to believe that Christ Jesus succeeded in His mission. Imagine: Jesus Christ—a *success*, of all things. Call us crazy, I know. Oh—and don’t forget “heretic.”

Then Paul says this:

“Foremost of whom am I.”

Paul declared himself to be the foremost of the sinners, and I think we ought to continue taking the man seriously. When categorizing the worst sinners, many of us



would place Adolph Hitler at the top of the list. Nope; he’s an “also ran.” Saul the Pharisee was worse. Hitler sought to kill Jews, but Paul fought Christ Himself. When our Lord appeared to Paul, He said to Him, “I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting.” That could not be said of Hitler.

On the day Saul the Pharisee headed off to Damascus to eradicate the name of Christ from the face of the Earth, God was preparing to unveil depths of grace that the world had never seen. Who does He choose to show off His grace skills? Does He seek the most likely candidate?

When a gem cutter picks a stone that will become a diamond, he looks for the one most likely to be coaxed from the rock. God does the opposite. Since His goal is to demonstrate *His* saving skill, He chooses the worst vessel, not the best. Please wrap your head around that. God’s motto is: *the worse the better*.

When humans want to display their love, they lavish it upon their friends. *Whoopee-do*. When God wants to display *His* love, He loads it into a bucket with a red bow and pours it over the heads of His most vile enemies. How stunning of Him. ■

Can you botch your salvation?

The simple answer to the above question is, “No,” but I need to fill up space here at the bottom of page 2, so let’s elaborate. Ephesians 1:3-5:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son.”

The phrase “disruption of the world” is the Concordant Version translation of the Greek word *katabole*, which the KJV and other versions make, “foundation of the world.” The etymology of *katabole*, however, demands a casting down, not a building up. The point is that there was a time when the universe was the picture of perfection, without a hint of sin to mar it. It was at that time—when everything was perfect

and smelling like roses—that God chose us as His sons and daughters.

Do you remember Stevie Wonder’s hit single, *Signed, Sealed, Delivered?* We were signed, sealed, and delivered as sons of God, not only before we were born, but before sin had ever infected us. Since this is so, then the entrance of sin can’t touch our position. If you duck into a barn *before* the rain storm, do you get wet? Very well then. If you are ducked into God’s purpose *before* sin, then sin can neither mar, hinder, nor delete that purpose. *It can only enhance an appreciation of it.* ■



What a Revelation!

SATAN SCREWS HIMSELF



Besides aligning himself with Santa Claus, Satan is constantly making bad decisions. For instance, rather than paying close attention to God’s deepest counsels, Satan reacts only to what God does on the surface. Not being a deep thinker, Satan is constantly screwing himself. The cross of Christ is a perfect example. Satan truly believed that killing Christ would end the threat of Christ saving the world. Because He could not fathom the deeper purpose of Calvary, Satan failed to see that killing Christ would actually *bring about* the salvation of the world.

Apply this principle to your life. Satan believes that vexing you with trials will make you give up your faith and curse God. In other words, to one degree or another, he gives you the “Job” treatment. Little does he realize that suffering evil for the sake of Christ has been graciously granted you by God (Phil. 1:29), and that you’ll be rewarded for it.

Wait until Satan finds out that all his antagonism will only heighten—on a day in the far future—his appreciation of God’s grace.

It will be the first time ever that he won’t feel screwed. ■

SATAN IS A WILEY
ADVERSARY
BUT **GOD** IS

Wiley

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.

Give it to me fast, Lord! (or not)

A man I knew once prayed that God would lead him into truth. Twenty years later, he escaped from the World Wide Church of God cult and found Christ. “Did God answer my prayer?” the man asked. “Yes. But He didn’t exactly take me in a straight line.”

I’ll say. One of my favorite sayings is, “God’s a tricky One.” Few people have the audacity to say or even think something like this, but please notice how I still capitalize the “O.” Let’s be honest: If one were to photograph human movement from a gigantic and really high Goodyear blimp, we would probably all look like a bunch of drunk ants. Be assured, however, that there is great method to God’s “madness.” In



His “meandering,” God is actually being nice. For a change of pace, apply 1 Cor. 13: 4-5 to God’s love toward us:

“Love is patient; love is kind; it is not indecent; it is not incensed.”

My friend realized that without the twenty-year backdrop of religious bondage, he would



never have appreciated the freedom of Christ.

“Do you ever think that twenty years was overkill?” I asked.

“Not at all,” he said. “It’s all about God getting rid of stubbornness while still massaging our sensibilities. If it takes twenty minutes, praise God. If it pleases Him to take twenty years, then praise God again.”

Good point. I suppose God could change us in twenty seconds, but something tells me that would really hurt. And so: “Take your time, Lord Jesus.” ■

Why you and not her?

The teaching of human free will creates practical humanists

There are humanists who own the title and declare themselves to be the captains of their own life and destiny, and then there are the stealth humanists who hide their humanism behind the cloak of self-righteousness. I like to call these kinds of people: “Christians.”

I don’t seek out stealth humanists any more than I would seek out lunch at a landfill. It’s just that the aroma occasionally surfaces, making it hard to ignore.

“Jesus saved me! It was 100% Jesus! Praise Jesus!”

“Really?”

“Yes!”

“If it’s 100% Jesus, then why is your Aunt Suzie going to hell?”

“Because *I* believed on Jesus and she didn’t.”

“Which part of the ‘100% Jesus’ screwed Aunt Suzie?”

“Huh?”

“If it’s 100% Jesus with you, then why isn’t it 100% Jesus with Aunt Suzie?”



“I don’t like this line of questioning.”

“Nobody likes having their hypocrisy exposed. If it’s 100% Jesus with you, then obviously Jesus called you and gave you faith. So why didn’t He call and give faith to Aunt Suzie?”

“Okay. Look. I’m saved because *I* believed in Jesus. It *wasn’t* all Jesus; I just say that. It was part Him, and part me. It was His cross, plus my decision.”

“And the most important part of that transaction was...”

“My decision. *Obviously*. Happy now?”

“Not really.”

“Want to get lunch?”

“We’re already at the landfill, so we might as well.” ■