

Paradise Lost BOOK 12
John Milton (1667)

THE ARGUMENT

The Angel Michael continues from the Flood to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain, who that Seed of the Woman shall be, which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall; his Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascention; the state of the Church till his second Coming. Adam greatly satisfied and recomforted by these Relations and Promises descends the Hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams compos'd to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery Sword waving behind them, and the Cherubim taking thir Stations to guard the Place.

AS one who in his journey bates at Noone,
Though bent on speed, so heer the Archangel paus'd
Betwixt the world destroy'd and world restor'd,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose;
Then with transition sweet new Speech resumes. [5]
 Thus thou hast seen one World begin and end;
And Man as from a second stock proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see, but I perceave
Thy mortal sight to faile; objects divine
Must needs impaire and wearie human sense: [10]
Henceforth what is to com I will relate,
Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.
This second sours of Men, while yet but few;
And while the dread of judgement past remains
Fresh in thir mindes, fearing the Deitie, [15]
With some regard to what is just and right
Shall lead thir lives and multiplie apace,
Labouring the soile, and reaping plenteous crop,
Corn wine and oyle; and from the herd or flock,
Oft sacrificing Bullock, Lamb, or Kid, [20]
With large Wine-offerings pour'd, and sacred Feast,
Shal spend thir dayes in joy unblam'd, and dwell
Long time in peace by Families and Tribes
Under paternal rule; till one shall rise
Of proud ambitious heart, who not content [25]
With fair equalitie, fraternal state,
Will arrogate Dominion undeserv'd
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
Concord and law of Nature from the Earth,
Hunting (and Men not Beasts shall be his game) [30]
With Warr and hostile snare such as refuse

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Subjection to his Empire tyrannous:
 A mightie Hunter thence he shall be styl'd
 Before the Lord, as in despite of Heav'n,
 Or from Heav'n claming second Sovrantie; [35]
 And from Rebellion shall derive his name,
 Though of Rebellion others he accuse.
 Hee with a crew, whom like Ambition joyns
 With him or under him to tyrannize,
 Marching from *Eden* towards the West, shall finde [40]
 The Plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
 Boiles out from under ground, the mouth of Hell;
 Of Brick, and of that stuff they cast to build
 A Citie and Towre, whose top may reach to Heav'n;
 And get themselves a name, least far disperst [45]
 In foraign Lands thir memorie be lost,
 Regardless whether good or evil fame.
 But God who oft descends to visit men
 Unseen, and through thir habitations walks
 To mark thir doings, them beholding soon, [50]
 Comes down to see thir Citie, ere the Tower
 Obstruct Heav'n Towrs, and in derision sets
 Upon thir Tongues a various Spirit to rase
 Quite out thir Native Language, and instead
 To sow a jangling noise of words unknown: [55]
 Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud
 Among the Builders; each to other calls
 Not understood, till hoarse, and all in rage,
 As mockt they storm; great laughter was in Heav'n
 And looking down, to see the hubbub strange [60]
 And hear the din; thus was the building left
 Ridiculous, and the work Confusion nam'd.
 Whereto thus *Adam* fatherly displeas'd.
 O execrable Son so to aspire
 Above his Brethren, to himself assuming [65]
 Authoritie usurpt, from God not giv'n:
 He gave us onely over Beast, Fish, Fowl
 Dominion absolute; that right we hold
 By his donation; but Man over men
 He made not Lord; such title to himself [70]
 Reserving, human left from human free.
 But this Usurper his encroachment proud
 Stayes not on Man; to God his Tower intends
 Siege and defiance: Wretched man! what food
 Will he convey up thither to sustain [75]
 Himself and his rash Armie, where thin Aire

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Above the Clouds will pine his entrails gross,
 And famish him of Breath, if not of Bread?
 To whom thus *Michael*. Justly thou abhorr'st
 That Son, who on the quiet state of men [80]
 Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
 Rational Libertie; yet know withall,
 Since thy original lapse, true Libertie
 Is lost, which alwayes with right Reason dwells
 Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being: [85]
 Reason in man obscur'd, or not obeyd,
 Immediately inordinate desires
 And upstart Passions catch the Government
 From Reason, and to servitude reduce
 Man till then free. Therefore since hee permits [90]
 Within himself unworthie Powers to reign
 Over free Reason, God in Judgement just
 Subjects him from without to violent Lords;
 Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
 His outward freedom: Tyrannie must be, [95]
 Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse.
 Yet somtimes Nations will decline so low
 From vertue, which is reason, that no wrong,
 But Justice, and some fatal curse annex
 Deprives them of thir outward libertie, [100]
 Thir inward lost: Witness th' irreverent Son
 Of him who built the Ark, who for the shame
 Don to his Father, heard this heavie curse,
Servant of Servants, on his vitious Race.
 Thus will this latter, as the former World, [105]
 Still tend from bad to worse, till God at last
 Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
 His presence from among them, and avert
 His holy Eyes; resolving from thenceforth
 To leave them to thir own polluted wayes; [110]
 And one peculiar Nation to select
 From all the rest, of whom to be invok'd,
 A Nation from one faithful man to spring:
 Him on this side *Euphrates* yet residing,
 Bred up in Idol-worship; O that men [115]
 (Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
 While yet the Patriark liv'd, who scap'd the Flood,
 As to forsake the living God, and fall
 To worship thir own work in Wood and Stone
 For Gods! yet him God the most High voutsafes [120]
 To call by Vision from his Fathers house,

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His kindred and false Gods, into a Land
 Which he will shew him, and from him will raise
 A mightie Nation, and upon him showre
 His benediction so, that in his Seed [125]
 All Nations shall be blest; he straight obeys
 Not knowing to what Land, yet firm believes:
 I see him, but thou canst not, with what Faith
 He leaves his Gods, his Friends, and native Soile
 Ur of *Chaldæa*, passing now the Ford [130]
 To *Haran*, after a cumbrous Train
 Of Herds and Flocks, and numerous servitude;
 Not wandring poor, but trusting all his wealth
 With God, who call'd him, in a land unknown.
Canaan he now attains, I see his Tents [135]
 Pitcht about *Sechem*, and the neighbouring Plaine
 Of *Moreh*; there by promise he receaves
 Gift to his Progenie of all that Land;
 From *Hamath* Northward to the Desert South
 (Things by thir names I call, though yet unnam'd) [140]
 From *Hermon* East to the great Western Sea,
 Mount *Hermon*, yonder Sea, each place behold
 In prospect, as I point them; on the shoare
 Mount *Carmel*; here the double-founted stream
Jordan, true limit Eastward; but his Sons [145]
 Shall dwell to *Senir*, that long ridge of Hills.
 This ponder, that all Nations of the Earth
 Shall in his Seed be blessed; by that Seed
 Is meant thy great deliverer, who shall bruise
 The Serpents head; whereof to thee anon [150]
 Plainlier shall be reveald. This Patriarch blest,
 Whom *faithful Abraham* due time shall call,
 A Son, and of his Son a Grand-*childe* leaves,
 Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown;
 The Grandchilde with twelve Sons increast, departs [155]
 From *Canaan*, to a land hereafter call'd
Egypt, divided by the River *Nile*;
 See where it flows, disgorging at *seaven mouthes*
 Into the Sea: to sojourn in that Land
 He comes invited by a *yonger* Son [160]
 In time of dearth, a Son whose worthy deeds
 Raise him to be the second in that Realme
 Of *Pharao*: there he dies, and leaves his Race
 Growing into a Nation, and now grown
 Suspected to a sequent King, who seeks [165]
 To stop thir overgrowth, as inmate guests

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Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves
 Inhospitably, and kills thir infant Males:
 Till by two brethren (those two brethren call
Moses and *Aaron*) sent from God to claime [170]
 His people from enthrallment, they return
 With glory and spoile back to thir promis'd Land.
 But first the lawless Tyrant, who denies
 To know thir God, or message to regard,
 Must be compell'd by Signes and Judgements dire; [175]
 To blood unshed the Rivers must be turnd,
 Frogs, Lice and Flies must all his Palace fill
 With loath'd intrusion, and fill all the land;
 His Cattel must of Rot and Murren die,
 Botches and blaines must all his flesh imboss, [180]
 And all his people; Thunder mixt with Haile,
 Haile mixt with fire must rend th' *Egyptian* Skie
 And wheel on th' Earth, devouring where it roul's;
 What it devours not, Herb, or Fruit, or Graine,
 A darksom Cloud of Locusts swarming down [185]
 Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green:
 Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
 Palpable darkness, and blot out three dayes;
 Last with one midnight stroke all the first-born
 Of *Egypt* must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds [190]
 The River-dragon tam'd at length submits
 To let his sojourners depart, and oft
 Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as Ice
 More hard'nd after thaw, till in his rage
 Pursuing whom he late dismissd, the Sea [195]
 Swallows him with his Host, but them lets pass
 As on drie land between two christal walls,
 Aw'd by the rod of *Moses* so to stand
 Divided, till his rescu'd gain thir shoar:
 Such wondrous power God to his Saint will lend, [200]
 Though present in his Angel, who shall goe
 Before them in a Cloud, and Pillar of Fire,
 By day a Cloud, by night a Pillar of Fire,
 To guide them in thir journey, and remove
 Behinde them, while th' obdurat King pursues: [205]
 All night he will pursue, but his approach
 Darkness defends between till morning Watch;
 Then through the Firey Pillar and the Cloud
 God looking forth will trouble all his Host
 And craze thir Chariot wheels: when by command [210]
Moses once more his potent Rod extends

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Over the Sea; the Sea his Rod obeys;
 On thir imbattelld ranks the Waves return,
 And overwhelm [thir Warr](#): the Race elect
 Safe towards *Canaan* from the shoar advance [215]
 Through the wilde Desert, not the readiest way,
 Least entring on the *Canaanite* allarmd
 Warr terrifie them inexpert, and feare
 Return them back to *Egypt*, choosing rather
 Inglorious life with servitude; for life [220]
 To noble and ignoble is more sweet
 Untraind in [Armes](#), where rashness leads not on.
 This also shall they gain by [thir](#) delay
 In the wide Wilderness, there they shall found
 Thir government, and thir great Senate choose [225]
 Through the twelve Tribes, to rule by Laws ordaind:
 God from the Mount of Sinai, whose gray top
 Shall tremble, he descending, will himself
 In Thunder Lightning and loud Trumpets sound
 Ordaine them Lawes; part such as appertaine [230]
 To civil Justice, part religious Rites
 Of sacrifice, informing them, by types
 And [shadowes](#), of that destind Seed to bruise
 The Serpent, by what meanes he shall achieve
 Mankinds deliverance. But the voice of God [235]
 To mortal eare is dreadful; they beseech
 That *Moses* might report to them his will,
 And terror cease; he grants what they besaught
 Instructed that to God is no access
 Without Mediator, whose high Office now [240]
Moses in figure beares, to introduce
 One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,
 And all the Prophets in thir Age the times
 Of great [Messiah](#) shall sing. Thus Laws and Rites
 Establisht, such delight hath God in Men [245]
 Obedient to his will, that he voutsafes
 Among them to set up his Tabernacle,
 The holy One with mortal Men to dwell:
 By his prescript a Sanctuary is fram'd
 Of Cedar, overlaid with Gold, therein [250]
 An Ark, and in the Ark his Testimony,
 The Records of his Cov'nant, over these
 A Mercie-seat of Gold between the wings
 Of two bright Cherubim, before him burn
[Seaven](#) Lamps as in a Zodiac representing [255]
 The Heav'nly fires; over the Tent a Cloud

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Shall rest by Day, a fiery gleame by Night,
 Save when they journie, and at length they come,
 Conducted by his Angel to the Land
 Promisd to *Abraham* and his Seed: the rest [260]
 Were long to tell, how many Battels fought,
 How many Kings destroyd, and Kingdoms won,
 Or how the Sun shall in mid Heav'n stand still
 A day entire, and Nights due course adjourne,
 Mans voice commanding, Sun in *Gibeon* stand, [265]
 And thou Moon in the vale of *Aialon*,
 Till *Israel* overcome; so call the third
 From *Abraham*, Son of *Isaac*, and from him
 His whole descent, who thus shall *Canaan* win.
 Here *Adam* interpos'd. O sent from Heav'n, [270]
 Enlightner of my darkness, gracious things
 Thou hast reveald, those chiefly which concerne
 Just *Abraham* and his Seed: now first I finde
 Mine eyes true op'ning, and my heart much eas'd,
 Erwhile perplext with thoughts what would becom [275]
 Of mee and all Mankind; but now I see
 His day, in whom all Nations shall be blest,
 Favour unmerited by me, who sought
 Forbidd'n knowledge by forbidd'n means.
 This yet I apprehend not, why to those [280]
 Among whom God will deigne to dwell on Earth
 So many and so various Laws are giv'n;
 So many Laws argue so many sins
 Among them; how can God with such reside?
 To whom thus *Michael*. Doubt not but that sin [285]
 Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
 And therefore was Law given them to evince
 Thir natural *pravitie*, by stirring up
 Sin against Law to fight; that when they see
 Law can discover sin, but not remove, [290]
 Save by those shadowie expiations weak,
 The bloud of Bulls and Goats, they may conclude
 Some bloud more precious must be paid for Man,
 Just for unjust, that in such righteousness
 To them by Faith imputed, they may finde [295]
 Justification towards God, and peace
 Of Conscience, which the Law by Ceremonies
 Cannot appease, nor Man the moral part
 Perform, and not performing cannot live.
 So Law appears imperfet, and but giv'n [300]
 With purpose to resign them in full time

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Up to a better Cov'nant, disciplin'd
 From shadowie Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit,
 From imposition of strict Laws, to free
 Acceptance of large Grace, from servil fear [305]
 To filial, works of Law to works of Faith.
 And therefore shall not *Moses*, though of God
 Highly belov'd, being but the Minister
 Of Law, his people into *Canaan* lead;
 But *Joshua* whom the Gentiles *Jesus* call, [310]
 His Name and Office bearing, who shall quell
 The adversarie Serpent, and bring back
 Through the worlds wilderness long wanderd man
 Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
 Meanwhile they in thir earthly Canaan plac't [315]
 Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
 National interrupt thir public peace,
 Provoking God to raise them enemies:
 From whom as oft he saves them penitent
 By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom [320]
 The second, both for pietie renownd
 And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
 Irrevocable, that his Regal Throne
 For ever shall endure; the like shall sing
 All Prophecie, That of the Royal Stock [325]
 Of *David* (so I name this King) shall rise
 A Son, the Womans Seed to thee foretold,
 Foretold to *Abraham*, as in whom shall trust
 All Nations, and to Kings foretold, of Kings
 The last, for of his Reign shall be no end. [330]
 But first a long succession must ensue,
 And his next Son for Wealth and Wisdom fam'd,
 The clouded Ark of God till then in Tents
 Wandring, shall in a glorious Temple enshrine.
 Such follow him, as shall be registerd [335]
 Part good, part bad, of bad the longer scrowle,
 Whose foul Idolatries, and other faults
 Heapt to the popular summe, will so incense
 God, as to leave them, and expose thir Land,
 Thir Citie, his Temple, and his holy Ark [340]
 With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
 To that proud Citie, whose high Walls thou saw'st
 Left in confusion, Babylon thence call'd.
 There in captivitie he lets them dwell
 The space of seventie years, then brings them back, [345]
 Remembring mercie, and his Cov'nant sworn

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To *David*, stablisht as the dayes of Heav'n.
 Returnd from *Babylon* by leave of Kings
 Thir Lords, whom God dispos'd, the house of God
 They first re-[edifie](#), and for a while [350]
 In mean estate live moderate, till grown
 In wealth and multitude, factious they grow;
 But first among the Priests dissension springs,
 Men who attend the Altar, and should most
 Endeavour Peace: thir strife pollution brings [355]
 Upon the Temple it self: at last they seise
 The Scepter, and regard not *Davids* Sons,
 Then loose it to a stranger, that the true
 Anointed King *Messiah* might be born
 Barr'd of his right; yet at his Birth a Starr [360]
 Unseen before in Heav'n proclaims him com,
 And guides the Eastern Sages, who enquire
 His place, to offer Incense, Myrrh, and Gold;
 His place of birth a solemn Angel tells
 To simple Shepherds, keeping watch by night; [365]
 They gladly thither haste, and by a Quire
 Of squadrond Angels hear his Carol sung.
 A Virgin is his Mother, but his Sire
 The Power of the most High; he shall ascend
 The Throne hereditarie, and bound his Reign [370]
 With earths wide bounds, his glory with the Heav'ns.
 He ceas'd, discerning *Adam* with such joy
 Surcharg'd, as had like grief bin dew'd in tears,
 Without the vent of words, which these he breathd.
 O Prophet of glad tidings, finisher [375]
 Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
 What oft my steddier thoughts have searcht in vain,
 Why our great expectation should be call'd
 The seed of Woman: Virgin Mother, [Haile](#),
 High in the love of Heav'n, yet from my Loynes [380]
 Thou shalt proceed, and from thy Womb the Son
 Of God most High; So God with man unites.
 Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise
 Expect with mortal paine: say where and when
 Thir fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victors heel [385].
 To whom thus *Michael*. Dream not of thir fight,
 As of a Duel, or the local wounds
 Of head or heel: not therefore joynes the Son
 Manhood to God-head, with more strength to foil
 Thy enemie; nor so is overcome [390]
Satan, whose fall from Heav'n, a deadlier bruise,

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Disabl'd not to give thee thy deaths wound:
 Which hee, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
 Not by destroying *Satan*, but his works
 In thee and in thy Seed: nor can this be, [395]
 But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
 Obedience to the Law of God, impos'd
 On penaltie of death, and suffering death,
 The penaltie to thy transgression due,
 And due to theirs which out of thine will grow: [400]
 So onely can high Justice rest appaid.
 The Law of God exact he shall fulfill
 Both by obedience and by love, though love
 Alone fulfill the Law; thy punishment
 He shall endure by coming in the Flesh [405]
 To a reproachful life and cursed death,
 Proclaiming Life to all who shall believe
 In his redemption, and that his obedience
 Imputed becomes theirs by Faith, his merits
 To save them, not thir own, though legal works. [410]
 For this he shall live hated, be blasphem'd,
 Seis'd on by force, judg'd, and to death condemnd
 A shameful and accurst, nailed to the Cross
 By his own Nation, slaine for bringing Life;
 But to the Cross he nailes thy Enemies, [415]
 The Law that is against thee, and the sins
 Of all mankinde, with him there crucifi'd,
 Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
 In this his satisfaction; so he dies,
 But soon revives, Death over him no power [420]
 Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light
 Returne, the Starres of Morn shall see him rise
 Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
 Thy ransom paid, which Man from death redeems,
 His death for Man, as many as offerd Life [425]
 Neglect not, and the benefit imbrace
 By Faith not void of workes: this God-like act
 Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have dy'd,
 In sin for ever lost from life; this act
 Shall bruise the head of *Satan*, crush his strength [430]
 Defeating Sin and Death, his two maine armes,
 And fix farr deeper in his head thir stings
 Then temporal death shall bruise the Victors heel,
 Or theirs whom he redeems, a death like sleep,
 A gentle wafting to immortal Life. [435]
 Nor after resurrection shall he stay

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Longer on Earth then certaine times to appeer
 To his Disciples, Men who in his Life
 Still follow'd him; to them shall leave in charge
 To teach all nations what of him they learn'd [440]
 And his Salvation, them who shall beleeve
 Baptizing in the profluent streame, the signe
 Of washing them from guilt of sin to Life
 Pure, and in mind prepar'd, if so befall,
 For death, like that which the redeemer dy'd. [445]
 All Nations they shall teach; for from that day
 Not onely to the Sons of *Abrahams* Loines
 Salvation shall be Preacht, but to the Sons
 Of Abrahams Faith wherever through the world;
 So in his seed all Nations shall be blest. [450]
 Then to the Heav'n of Heav'ns he shall ascend
 With victory, triumphing through the aire
 Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
 The Serpent, Prince of aire, and drag in Chaines
 Through all his Realme, and there confounded leave; [455]
 Then enter into glory, and resume
 His Seat at Gods right hand, exalted high
 Above all names in Heav'n; and thence shall come,
 When this worlds dissolution shall be ripe,
 With glory and power to judge both quick and dead [460]
 To judge th' unfaithful dead, but to reward
 His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
 Whether in Heav'n or Earth, for then the Earth
 Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
 Then this of *Eden*, and far happier daies. [465]
 So spake th' Archangel *Michael*, then paus'd,
 As at the Worlds great period; and our Sire
 Replete with joy and wonder thus repli'd.
 O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
 That all this good of evil shall produce, [470]
 And evil turn to good; more wonderful
 Then that which by creation first brought forth
 Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,
 Whether I should repent me now of sin
 By mee done and occasiond, or rejoyce [475]
 Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
 To God more glory, more good will to Men
 From God, and over wrauth grace shall abound.
 But say, if our deliverer up to Heav'n
 Must reascend, what will betide the few [480]
 His faithful, left among th' unfaithful herd,

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The enemies of truth; who then shall guide
 His people, who defend? will they not deale
 Wors with his followers then with him they dealt?
 Be sure they will, said th' Angel; but from Heav'n [485]
 Hee to his own a Comforter will send,
 The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
 His Spirit within them, and the Law of Faith
 Working through love, upon thir hearts shall write,
 To guide them in all truth, and also arme [490]
 With spiritual Armour, able to resist
Satans assaults, and quench his fierie darts,
 What Man can do against them, not affraid,
 Though to the death, against such cruelties
 With inward consolations recompenc't, [495]
 And oft supported so as shall amaze
 Thir proudest persecuters: for the Spirit
Powrd first on his Apostles, whom he sends
 To evangelize the Nations, then on all
 Baptiz'd, shall them with wondrous gifts endue [500]
 To speak all Tongues, and do all Miracles,
 As did thir Lord before them. Thus they win
 Great numbers of each Nation to receive
 With joy the tidings brought from Heav'n: at length
 Thir Ministry perform'd, and race well run, [505]
 Thir doctrine and thir story written left,
 They die; but in thir room, as they forewarne,
 Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves,
 Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n
 To thir own vile advantages shall turne [510]
 Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
 With superstitions and traditions taint,
 Left onely in those written Records pure,
 Though not but by the Spirit understood.
 Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names, [515]
 Places and titles, and with these to joine
 Secular power, though feigning still to act
 By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
 The Spirit of God, promis'd alike and giv'n
 To all Beleevers; and from that pretense, [520]
 Spiritual Lawes by carnal power shall force
 On every conscience; Laws which none shall finde
 Left them inrould, or what the Spirit within
 Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
 But force the Spirit of Grace it self, and binde [525]
 His consort Libertie; what, but unbuild

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His living Temples, built by Faith to stand,
 Thir own Faith not anothers: for on Earth
 Who against Faith and Conscience can be heard
 Infallible? yet many will presume: [530]
 Whence heavie persecution shall arise
 On all who in the worship persevere
 Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, farr greater part,
 Well deem in outward Rites and specious formes
 Religion satisfi'd; Truth shall retire [535]
 Bestuck with slandrous darts, and works of Faith
 Rarely be found: so shall the World goe on,
 To good malignant, to bad men benigne,
 Under her own waight groaning till the day
 Appeer of respiration to the just, [540]
 And vengeance to the wicked, at return
 Of him so lately promiss'd to thy aid
 The Womans seed, obscurely then foretold,
 Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord,
 Last in the Clouds from Heav'n to be reveal'd [545]
 In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted World, then raise
 From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,
 New Heav'ns, new Earth, Ages of endless date
 Founded in righteousness and peace and love [550]
 To bring forth fruits Joy and eternal Bliss.
 He ended; and thus *Adam* last reply'd.
 How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,
 Measur'd this transient World, the Race of time,
 Till time stand fixt: beyond is all abyss, [555]
 Eternitie, whose end no eye can reach.
 Greatly instructed I shall hence depart.
 Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
 Of knowledge, what this Vessel can containe;
 Beyond which was my folly to aspire. [560]
 Henceforth I learne, that to obey is best,
 And love with feare the onely God, to walk
 As in his presence, ever to observe
 His providence, and on him sole depend,
 Merciful over all his works, with good [565]
 Still overcoming evil, and by small
 Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
 Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
 By simply meek; that suffering for Truths sake
 Is fortitude to highest victorie, [570]
 And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life;

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Taught this by his example whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.

To whom thus also th' Angel last repli'd:
This having learnt, thou hast attained the summe [575]
Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the Starrs
Thou knewst by name, and all th' ethereal Powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Natures works,
Or works of God in Heav'n, Aire, Earth, or Sea,
And all the riches of this World enjoydst, [580]
And all the rule, one Empire; onely add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,
Add vertue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
By name to come call'd Charitie, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath [585]
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier farr.

Let us descend now therefore from this top
Of Speculation; for the hour precise
Exacts our parting hence; and see the Guards, [590]
By mee encampt on yonder Hill, expect
Thir motion, at whose Front a flaming Sword,
In signal of remove, waves fiercely round;
We may no longer stay: go, waken *Eve*;
Her also I with gentle Dreams have calm'd [595]
Portending good, and all her spirits compos'd
To meek submission: thou at season fit
Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard,
Chiefly what may concern her Faith to know,
The great deliverance by her Seed to come [600]
(For by the Womans Seed) on all Mankind.
That ye may live, which will be many dayes,
Both in one Faith unanimous though sad,
With cause for evils past, yet much more cheer'd
With meditation on the happie end. [605]

He ended, and they both descend the Hill;
Descended, *Adam* to the Bowre where *Eve*
Lay sleeping ran before, but found her wak't;
And thus with words not sad she him receav'd.

Whence thou returnst, and whither wentst, I know; [610]
For God is also in sleep, and Dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and hearts distress
Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;
In mee is no delay; with thee to goe, [615]
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,

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Is to go hence unwilling; thou to mee
 Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou,
 Who for my wilful crime art banisht hence.
 This further consolation yet secure [620]
 I carry hence; though all by mee is lost,
 Such favour I unworthie am voutsaft,
 By mee the Promis'd Seed shall all restore.
 So spake our Mother *Eve*, and *Adam* heard
 Well pleas'd, but answer'd not; for now too nigh [625]
 Th' Archangel stood, and from the other Hill
 To thir fixt Station, all in bright array
 The Cherubim descended; on the ground
 Gliding meteorous, as Ev'ning Mist
 Ris'n from a River o're the marish glides, [630]
 And gathers ground fast at the Labourers heel
 Homeward returning. High in Front advanc't,
 The brandisht Sword of God before them blaz'd
 Fierce as a Comet; which with torrid heat,
 And vapour as the *Libyan* Air adust, [635]
 Began to parch that temperate Clime; whereat
 In either hand the hastning Angel caught
 Our lingring Parents, and to th' Eastern Gate
 Led them direct, and down the Cliff as fast
 To the subjected Plaine; then disappeer'd. [640]
 They looking back, all th' Eastern side beheld
 Of Paradise, so late thir happie seat,
 Wav'd over by that flaming Brand, the Gate
 With dreadful Faces throng'd and fierie Armes:
 Som natural tears they drop'd, but wip'd them soon; [645]
 The World was all before them, where to choose
 Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:
 They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,
 Through *Eden* took thir solitarie way.

THE END

Notes:

succeed. That is, happen next.

Relations. Narratives, the stories he has just heard from Michael.

Place. 1674 has a comma here; I have supplied a period.

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bates. Abates, pauses.

wearie human sense. Adam listened intently to Raphael tell of many divine things over the course of books 5-8 without feeling the least bit weary (8.210-216). Raphael "accommodated" things beyond "human sense" to Adam's capacity (5.564-576); perhaps Michael does not offer such accomodation, or a fallen Adam is even less capable? Recall that Adam did become weary conversing with God (8.452-458).

second sours. The second source of "Men" would, of course, be Noah. (Even in Genesis, we are not told his wife's name.)

mightie Hunter. This is Nimrod, styled in Genesis 10: 9 as "a mighty hunter before the Lord." See also the Geneva glosses about Nimrod. Flavius Josephus's *Antiquities* 1.4.2-3 also helped establish Nimrod as tyrant and founder of Babel. See also *Eikonoklastes* (*Complete Prose Works* 3.598) where Milton regards Nimrod as the founder of monarchy.

from Heav'n claming. See excerpts from James I's *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies: or, The Reciproock and Mutuall Duetie Betwixt a Free King and His Naturall Subjects* (1598). See also Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* for a refutation of divine right theory.

from Rebellion. Popular etymologies of the name Nimrod incorrectly linked it to a Hebrew word for rebel.

The Plain. The Plain of Shinar; see Genesis 11.

a name. See Genesis 11: 4. Michael never mentions either Nimrod or Babel by name.

various. Inconstant, wayward, contrary; see *OED2*.

rase. Erase, raze.

true Libertie. See *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. See also *Paradise Regain'd* 3.414-440 on Israel's "patrimony" of liberty.

some fatal curse. Because Milton is celebrated as a champion of liberty, commentators often fail to recognize these lines (97-110) as the justification for "natural" or race-specific slavery that they articulate. Steven Jablonksi puts the case succinctly: "Milton, for all his hatred of tyranny and love of liberty, was opposed to the enslavement of the wrong people rather than to slavery per se" (Jablonski 188).

irreverent Son. That is, Ham (father of Canaan), Noah's youngest son, punished by God for uncovering his father's nakedness (Genesis 9: 20-27). Commentators frequently interpreted Ham as the progenitor of the Canaanites, a people cursed by God to be slaves forever (see the Geneva notes). Some believed that black Africans also descended from Ham by way of his son Cush.

one peculiar Nation. Israel; see Deuteronomy 7: 6 and 14:2.

one faithful man. Abraham; see Genesis 17: 5.

Bred up in Idol-worship. See Joshua 24:2.

call by Vision. The narrative of Abraham's call is found in Genesis 11 and 12.

believes. Hebrews 11: 8 insists that Abraham was blessed by God because of his faith. So also did Paul in Romans 4:1-3. Paul and others tried hard to reinterpret Abraham as a figure of faith rather than just a chosen patriarch; it is also, for Paul, partly an attempt to re-define the identity, "son of Abraham" as a matter of belief rather than genetics, so that Christian gentiles can be defined as the "true" Israel and the "apostate" Jews as "cast out" (Galatians 3-4). But see also Daniel Boyarin's [A Radical Jew](#) and John G. Gager's [The Origins of Anti-semitism](#).

servitude. That is, a large train of servants.

Moreh. See Genesis 12: 6.

Senir. The Geneva glosses identify Shenir as Mount Hermon. See also Deuteronomy 3:9 and 1 Chronicles 5:23.

Lines 139-146. The description of the boundaries of the "promised land" is found in Numbers 34: 1-12.

that Seed. Here Milton, like most Christian interpreters of the Bible, identifies the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12: 1-3 with the curse pronounced on the serpent in Genesis 3: 15 and the supposedly messianic prophecies of, say, Daniel 7. All these, claims Milton, denote the first and final comings of Jesus Christ. In this way, the entire Hebrew Bible was routinely re-interpreted as an explicitly Christian document.

Grand-child. The "Son" is Isaac (Genesis 17-18, 22, 24-25) and the grandchild Jacob (Genesis 25-50).

twelve Sons. The twelve sons of Jacob (renamed Israel in Genesis 35: 10) are the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 35: 22-26).

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seven mouthes. Virgil's [Aeneid 6](#). 800 speaks of the Nile as seven-gated.

younger Son. That is, Joseph, Jacob's next-to-youngest son; see Genesis 42-47.

sequent King. A later Pharaoh; see Exodus 1: 8 and the chapters that follow.

kills thir infant Males. See Exodus 1: 15-16. For a comparison between Pharaoh and Charles I, see *Eikonoklastes*.

Signes and Judgements dire. For the story of the ten plagues, see Exodus 7-15.

Murren. Murrain or hoof-and-mouth disease.

Botches and blaines. Botches are swellings or infected pimples; blains are blisters or boils.

River-dragon. That is, Pharaoh; see Ezekiel 29: 3.

sojourners. The Israelites were not Egyptians, but sojourners in the land of Egypt; Pharaoh made them slaves.

christol walls. The story is in Exodus 14, but Milton's diction recalls his translation of Psalm 136:49-50.

present in his Angel. That is, God does not present himself to Moses as he once did to Adam (8.295ff), but as here and in book 11, is only present "in his angel," Michael; see Exodus 33: 2-4.

Lines 201-204. See Exodus 13: 21. The obdurate (hard-hearted) king is Pharaoh.

craze. Crack, shatter; but see Exodus 14.

thir Warr. Their Army.

Race elect. That is, the "children" of Israel, or the Israelites. The word is only beginning to have the full sense it acquires in 19th-century racist discourse. See [OED2](#): "The offspring or posterity of a person; a set of children or descendants."

Lines 215-222. Milton's complicated syntax appears basically to render the explanation in Exodus 13: 17-18, with perhaps the added suggestion that martial training not only makes one ready for the challenge of battle, but also changes one's basic attitudes toward life.

thir delay. That is, the forty years in the desert.

great Senate. Moses, Aaron, and the seventy elders that constituted their political and religious organization. See Exodus 24: 1-9 and Numbers 11: 16-30.

shadowes. For accurate and full, but uncritical, accounts of Puritan notions of typology, see William G. Madsen, [*From Shadowy Types to Truth*](#) or Barbara K. Lewalski, [*Protestant Poetics*](#). For a critical account, see Luxon, [*Literal Figures*](#).

dreadful. See Exodus 20: 19.

Messiah. Following Hebrews 8, Milton subscribes to the familiar Christian notion that Moses prefigures Jesus Christ and that the Israelites are a type or allegorical figure for Christians, the "true" people of God.

Tabernacle. The holiest of Hebrew shrines. See Exodus 33: 9, and for an account of its building, Exodus 25-27. Evangelical Christians have a special fascination with the tabernacle and have built clever reconstructions following the Exodus accounts. The Geneva Bible glossed "shittim wood" of Exodus 25:5 as "a kindred of cedar."

Seaven Lamps. The seven-branched candlestick or menorah was interpreted by Flavius Josephus in [*Antiquities*](#) 3.6.7 as symbolizing the seven planets.

stand still. See Joshua 10: 12-14.

Israel. Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham (originally Abram). See Genesis 32: 28.

evince. Make apparent.

pravitie. Depravity.

Lines 287-299. Milton makes Michael speak in specifically Pauline terms about law, sin, and justification; one might even say the terms reflect a specifically reformation understanding of the Pauline terms and concepts. See Romans 3 and Romans 7 and the Geneva glosses on Romans 3 and Romans 7. As with the tabernacle and the figure of Moses, the Hebrew law is interpreted as a shadowy prefiguration of Christian truth. Also see Martin Luther's [*Preface to Romans*](#).

a better Cov'nant. Again, Milton's familiar Christian cooptative allegorization of Hebrew law, worship, and even history follows the pattern outlined in Hebrews 8.

shadowie Types to Truth. The key phrase for typology, which is a Protestant version of allegory whereby historical events are taken to be allegories of later, usually apocalyptic, events. For accurate, but uncritical, accounts of Puritan notions of typology, see William G. Madsen, [From Shadowy Types to Truth](#) or Barbara K. Lewalski, [Protestant Poetics](#). For a critical account, see Luxon, [Literal Figures](#).

earthly Canaan. Like almost all Christian commentators, Milton regards the "promised land" of Canaan but an "earthly" figure for the "true" promised land of the Christian "Kingdom of Heaven." It is easy to see how Christianity breeds a persistent anti-Jewish strain from this supersessionist allegory of the Jews as "shadowy types" of Christians, a strain usually explained by Miltonists without any hint of distaste.

Judges first. Ancient Israel was ruled first by judges (see Judges and 1 and 2 Samuel), then by Kings (1 Kings and 2 Kings). Saul was Israel's first King (1 Samuel 9: 15-10:9).

the Womans Seed. Two gospel accounts trace Jesus's lineage to or from David; see Matthew 1 and Luke 3: 23-38.

next Son. Solomon, third king of Israel. See 1 Kings 5-8 and 2 Chronicles 2-5.

Babylon. Like most commentators, Milton believed Babel was somehow the precursor of the Babylonian Empire which, under Nebuchadnezzar, led Israel and its kings captive. See 2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 50, and Daniel.

re-edifie. See Ezra 1.

among the Priests. Milton first achieved fame writing against prelacy, that is against forms of church government based on bishops and archbishops (prelates). He believed that particular ecclesiastical structure was bound to lead to corruption. See [The Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelaty](#) (1642).

stranger. Antipater the Idumean, Roman-appointed governor of Jerusalem from 61 BCE and Procurator of Judaea (appointed by Julius Caesar) from 47 BCE. His son was Herod the Great, Roman-approved tetrarch of Judaea. See Josephus, [Antiquities](#) 14.8.5 and Matthew 2 and Luke 2.

Eastern Sages. The so-called Wise men; see Matthew 2: 11. *Lines 364-367*. See Luke 2.

Power of the most High. See Luke 1: 35.

Virgin Mother, Haile. See Luke 1: 31-35. See also 5.385-389 when Raphael greets Eve.

capital. On the head, as in *capitalis*, Latin for "on the head."

his works. See 1 John 3: 8.

appaid. Satisfied, paid up in full. See [OED2](#).

by obedience and by love. See Romans 13.

nailed to the Cross. See William Blake's 1808 watercolor illustration of these lines.

By his own Nation. Here Milton participates in one of the more persistent anti-Jewish slurs in his day, that Jews, not Romans nailed Jesus to the cross. This slur is based in part on passages like Luke 23: 13-24 and John 19: 12-18. See also Mark 15: 6-25. Flannagan (1998) glosses this passage as follows: "there is no evidence in Milton's works that he condemned Jews for having allowed the Crucifixion." This very passage seems evidence enough to me, though many Miltonists remain loath to recognize it as such. For a good history of anti-Jewish attitudes in church history, see James Carroll, [Constantine's Sword](#).

Starres of Morn. The phrase echoes to Job 38: 7.

thir stings. The imagery comes from 1 Corinthians 15: 55.

temporal death. Death in time, or temporary. As a mortalist, Milton believed that both body and soul died temporarily and were both resurrected together in judgment.

profluent streame. Maurice Kelley, in the Yale Complete Prose (6.544.n6) explains: Milton's position on this sacrament [baptism] may be described as Socinian-Anabaptist immersionism (complete immersion of the baptized person's body), with the further stipulation that the rite must be performed in running water," presumably like a river.

Sons/ Of Abrahams Faith. The Sons of Abraham's faith, as opposed to sons of Abraham's loins, would be Gentiles converted to Christianity, as opposed to Jews by birth. Paul argued that Christian Gentiles were more truly sons of Abraham than unconverted Jews. See Galatians 3:7. Traditional anti-semitism has its roots in such arguments.

Prince of aire. The Geneva glosses to Ephesians 2:2, identify "the prince of the power of the air" as Satan.

drag in Chaines. See Revelation 20 and book 1.48.

quick and dead. See 2 Timothy 4:1.

Whether in Heav'n or Earth. Will the faithful be rewarded with bliss in a new earth or in heaven? See the Geneva comments on Revelation 21:1.

grace shall abound. The phrase echoes Romans 5: 20.

Comforter. See John 15: 26.

spiritual Armour. See Ephesians 6: 11-17 and Spenser's Redcrosse Knight in [The Faerie Queene](#) 1.

Powrd first. Pentecost, Acts 2.

race well run. The phrase echoes 1 Corinthians 9: 24-26. See also [Areopagitica](#).

grievous Wolves. See Acts 20: 29 and "Lycidas" 128.

lucre. See 1 Peter 5:2.

Infallible. Even though the doctrine of the papal infallibility was not made official church dogma until 1870, it was all-but-official doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church of Milton's day. See *The Catholic Encyclopedia's* article on Infallibility. See also Milton's *A Treatise on Civil Power* ([Complete Prose Works](#) 7.248).

Spirit and Truth. See John 4: 23.

Well. 1667 has "Will" here.

groaning. The phrase echoes Romans 8: 22.

feare. See Psalm 111: 10.

Merciful. Psalm 145: 9.

overcoming evil. Romans 12: 21.

worldly strong. 1 Corinthians 1: 27.

suffering for Truths sake. Heroic martyrdom is one of Milton's predominant themes; see 9.31-33 and [Paradise Regain'd](#) 1.426 and [Samson Agonistes](#) 654.

Acknowledge. Thus Milton makes Adam a proleptic Christian as the supercessionist tradition did so many Hebrew patriarchs and prophets, the most famous being, perhaps, Daniel. See also Robert Lerner's study of medieval millenarianism, [*The Feast of Abraham*](#).

Lines 582-583. 2 Peter 1: 5-7.

wak't. Even though the "Argument" above indicates that Adam wakes Eve.

Lines 621-623. Speaking precisely, Adam has not been banished for Eve's crime, nor has all been lost through her transgression, nor shall the "Promis'd Seed" restore all by her. Milton presents Eve as having the gist of the matter, but not the precise details. It's as if Milton puts the first misogynistic overstatements of Eve's crime in Eve's own mouth, as well as the first inaccurate pseudo-feminist assessments of Eve.

marish. Marsh.

adust. Scorched.

the hastning Angel. See William Blake's 1808 watercolor illustration of these lines.