

glorifying God and singing God's praises: "Alleluia, to whom be glory and power forever and ever."

The Latin Text (Vita)

Despite considerable overlap with the Greek version, the Latin text (Vita) in many respects is a different story. It, too, picks up the account of Adam and Eve immediately after "they were driven out of paradise" (1:1). Now standing outside the garden, the human couple found themselves facing hunger for the first time. For seven days Adam traversed this new land seeking food. Together he and Eve searched an additional nine days, but all they all they could find was what God had "apportioned for animals and beasts to eat," but nothing of "the food of angels" to which they had been accustomed in paradise. In desperation they agree to seek help from God, after doing suitable penance for their sin.

Eve defers to Adam since he knows best. Adam responds, "Although you are not capable of doing as much penance as I, nevertheless you should do as much as you are able." Adam proposes that he should spend forty days fasting, while standing up to his neck in the River Jordan. Meanwhile, Eve should proceed to the closer Tigris river and similarly immerse herself and fast for thirty-seven days. Both are to remain completely silent during this period of penance, for only afterwards will it be proper for them to implore the Lord, since their lips are unclean from having eaten the forbidden fruit in paradise. Eve agrees, and they each go to their respective stations.

After eighteen days—only halfway into the agreed period of penance—Satan disguised himself as an angel of light and approached Eve standing in the Tigris. Finding Eve weeping contritely, Satan feigns tears of empathy. He tells Eve she and her husband need weep no longer, for God has accepted their repentance, especially because "all *we angels* have interceded for you with the Lord as well." Moreover, the deceiver continued, "God has sent me to bring you out from this freezing water and to restore your food, indeed the very food which you enjoyed in paradise!" What a naïve, gullible woman! Believing this bald-faced lie, Eve abandoned her penance in the Tigris River, her skin all shriveled and "grass green" (which is to say, blue from the icy cold water).

Satan led Eve to the Jordan, to Adam, to deliver the good news. But Adam was not so easily fooled.

As soon as Adam saw her and the devil with her, he cried out with tear-filled eyes, "O Eve, Eve! Why have you stopped your acts of penance? How could you be seduced a second time by our enemy, the very one who previously robbed us of our home in paradise and of our spiritual happiness?" (10:3-4)

Only then did Eve understand that she had succumbed a second time to Satan's machinations and lies. Flinging herself to the ground, she demanded of Satan why he continued to assault and torment them so. And for once Satan spoke forthrightly and without any duplicity.

Satan's Answer: Adam Was the Cause of Satan Being Expelled from Heaven

Satan seemed eager to give Eve an answer to her question: "Why do you harbor such hate toward Adam and me?" "O Adam," Satan responded, "every ounce of my enmity, my envy, my sorrow is due to you! Because of you I am expelled from heaven and deprived of the glory I once had as one of the angels. Because of you I am now exiled to earth." Confused, Adam queried, "How so? What did I do to you?"

Indeed, Adam could not have known. Satan's account detailed what had happened *before* Adam was created: Before God created Adam, God had dismissed Satan from his presence, allowing only selected angels to be present. God blew his life breath into you, Adam. After creating you in his own image, God instructed Michael to see that each of us angels worship the image of God. Michael immediately complied, the first to do so. Michael then summoned Satan, as the second highest angel, and commanded him to worship the image of the Lord God. "I will not worship Adam," Satan haughtily replied. "I will not worship one inferior and subsequent to me. I am prior to him in creation; before he was made, I was already created. He ought to worship me!"

Michael continued to pressure Satan, charging that he would surely incur the wrath of God. Satan hastily shot back, "Should he (attempt to) inflict his wrath upon me, I will set my throne above the stars and will be like the Most High." Mistaking arrogance for power, a band of angels under Satan's command also joined Satan in refusing to worship. Satan and his associates quickly learned how terribly they had miscalculated the power of the Most High. Immediately they were cast out of heaven and onto the earth, deprived of their former glory. From this incident

stemmed their enmity toward Adam and his wife. As Satan confessed to Adam, “We (fallen angels) were pained to see you in such bliss of delights. So with deceit I assailed your wife and caused you to be expelled through her from the joys of your bliss, as I have been expelled from my glory” (16:2–3).

Having heard the devil’s own account, Adam cried out to God for relief from the assaults of Satan. At once the devil disappeared. To Adam’s credit, he “persisted the (full) forty days standing in repentance in the water of the Jordan” (17:1–3), thereby foiling Satan’s hope for total ruin of the human couple and their descendants.

The Next Generation (chapters 18–24)

Having seen firsthand how superior, both intellectually and morally, Adam was to her, Eve decided to separate from her husband, for his good. “You should live without me, my lord,” she tells Adam. “You did not succumb to either the first or the second temptation. I was the one who was deceived and erred by not keeping the command of God. You and I should separate. I will walk toward the sunset and die” (18:1–3). So she departed and built herself a hut for shelter. She was three months pregnant.

When it came time to give birth, she was alone, with no one to help her. Even God seemed to have deserted her. In desperation she cried out to heaven that somehow news might reach Adam. Intuiting that something was wrong, that perhaps the serpent was once again assailing Eve, Adam went seeking Eve. Finding her in distress, he prayed to God for help.

And behold “twelve angels and two excellencies came” and assisted Eve in giving birth. Michael stood beside her and declared, “Blessed are you, Eve, because of Adam. Because of his intercession, I have been sent to help you” (21:1–2). Eve delivered an awesome son, Cain. Immediately upon birth the child stood up and ran to procure a “reed” to give to his mother. (Latin *herbum* “grass/reed” likely translates an original Semitic vocable *qaneh* “reed,” suggestive of an original pun on the boy’s name *Qayin*, “Cain.”) Michael then brought Adam and Eve and the child back to the East, where the angel Michael taught Adam how to work and till the ground so that they and their descendants might live.