

BREAD OF LIFE TORAH STUDIES

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger... John 6:35

GENESIS 3-4

Last week we reflected on the creation story culminating in Elohim making mankind in their own image and likeness, and breathing into his nostrils the 'breath of life'. Psalm 8:5-6 refers to man's initial glory and status this way:

Yet you have made man a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet.

According to Jewish sages Adam shone with divine glory, unsullied righteousness, having a purity and innocence that knew no evil. "The likeness that Adam and God shared was not physicality, in the usual sense of having a body, but rather luminescence." We should not be surprised, for God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 Jn. 1:5b)

Perhaps we see a glimpse of Adam's initial glory in Exodus 34:29-35, where we read that, when Moses descended from the presence of God with the tablets of stone for the second time, the skin on his face became so radiant that he needed to put a veil over his face because the Israelites were afraid to come near him. (Ex. 33:18-23; 34:30). Also, on the Mount of Transfiguration it was said that the face of Christ shone like the sun.

However, as we well know, that initial glory was not to last. Although Adam was a spiritual being, joined in intimate relationship with God – who is Spirit – he was also a man of the flesh, made from the 'dust of the earth,' with five senses.

Chapter 3 – The Fall of Man

3:1 *Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.*

The first thing we need to notice here is the wording: Our Western minds tend to read the word "other" into this sentence. However, the serpent is not said to be a 'beast of the field' – he is just said to be 'more subtle/crafty' than them. What is this crafty one doing inside God's Holy creation?

"Today, no less than in the past, sin begins with a dialogue between animal instinct and human conscience. Which will win out? This is the crucial question."¹ At this point, man knows neither good nor evil. He is faced with a freewill choice that is very tempting, and his flesh desires to 'taste' it. ('Forbidden fruit tastes sweeter.')

READ 3:1-6 Examine the strategy 'the serpent' used in his temptation of Eve.

v.6 "When the woman saw . . ." It seems she had not really 'seen' it before in the same way. What did she *see* that tempted her, and how should we understand it?

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father ... 1 Jn. 2:16

¹ Munk, *Call of Torah*.

Q. How do you come to terms with the fact that God knew mankind would face temptation, and He knew he would give in to it because of his flesh nature?

There were two trees in the garden. Or were there? Read carefully 2:9; 3:3; 3:22-23 - Notice that both trees are said to be 'in the midst of the garden'. Perhaps, like me, you have never questioned that there were two trees in the garden, or indeed whether they were real trees. **Read Proverbs 3:13-20.** *"The Lord by his wisdom hath founded the earth..."* Proverbs 3 goes on to liken the treasures of wisdom to a *"tree of life to those who lay hold of her"* (v.18). We also see other motifs from Eden in these verses: the gold, silver & precious stones; the meaning of "Eden" is delight/pleasantness. To be sure, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil was not bearing apples!

The Apocryphal Book of Esdras puts it this way: (2 Esdras 4:30)

For a grain of evil seed was sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning, and how much fruit of godlessness has it produced up to this time, and shall yet produce until the harvest comes.

2 Cor.11:3 *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

As we know, when 'the woman' gave in to the temptation and ate the forbidden fruit and gave to Adam and he also ate: *the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God ...* (Gen. 3:7-8)

Note first of all, that it is only after the 'fall' that the LORD is heard walking in the garden... The Hebrew terminology used in Genesis 3:8 is very interesting: they "heard the voice of the Lord God walking." How could they *hear* the voice of God walking? In the Bible, "walking" (Heb: *halak*) is often used of the way we live our lives. For example, Isaiah 6:7 says: "Come descendants of Jacob let us walk in the light of the LORD." To walk in the light means to live in accordance with the revealed Word of God. One could therefore say they heard the '*word of God walking...*' The voice of God that once resonated wisdom and truth from within was now convicting them from without. Their eyes were opened to see their own nakedness before Him, and they felt shame and hid themselves.

v.9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

Of course, God knew exactly where they were, **so what does this question mean?**

New Covenant Insight - "Their eyes were opened"

Gen. 3:7-9 *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.*

When Adam and Eve ate "their eyes were opened" , but the same act separated from the source of true wisdom and life, and a wedge of division was also driven between them.

Now, let's have a look at a very familiar story in Luke 24 – the Road to Emmaus (note particularly verses 16 & 30,31). Although everything about this 'stranger' should have reminded them of Yeshua, they perceived a mere man, not recognizing him until the moment when "their eyes were opened" by a sovereign act of God, in the breaking of bread.

Note the striking symmetry between the phrase: 'their eyes were opened' in Luke 24, as against 'their eyes were opened' in Genesis 3:7. This helps us to understand the depth and enormity of what happened - first in Eden, and thousands of years later, on the road to Emmaus after the death and resurrection of Christ. Eyes that are opened in one direction by the temptation of Satan are, at the same time, closed to God and all his bountiful goodness. They can only be re-opened in the opposite

direction again by the one sent to redeem them.² This is the culmination of the whole Gospel story – the beginning of mankind’s restoration.

Chapter 4 – Cain and Abel

This is an important story to understand because it contains several foundational themes that will be unfolded as we go through Genesis e.g. the righteous seed lineage, acceptable offerings, grace, and the conflict between two brothers.

READ 4:1-16

When we examine the first two verses we see a stark contrast in the language used with regard to the two births? The Hebrew literally reads: “I have gotten a man YHVH.”³

There is an interesting Hebrew word-play used here in the naming of Cain by Eve. The name Cain means “possession”.⁴ One commentator⁵ notes that Eve may have seen her first son as the fulfilment of the Genesis 3:15 prophecy to the serpent – the ‘God-man’ who would crush the serpent’s head – but as we well know, this was not to be. Regarding Abel, the text simply says that Eve gave birth to him, without stating that she named him. The Hebrew word, translated as Abel, means “vapour” or “a breath”. This is the first pair of two contrasting sons, which becomes a theme throughout Torah: Cain born according to the flesh; Abel born according to the spirit.

Let’s pause here and link the birth of these two sons, with the events of the previous chapter.

Cain is a tiller of the ground and ‘in the course of time’⁶ brings an offering to the Lord from the *fruit of the ground*. Abel was a keeper of sheep and brings an offering from *the choicest of the firstlings of his flock*. Offerings to the LORD are introduced here for the first time – one is accepted, the other rejected.

In Biblical terms, occupation gives us a window into the heart. Shepherds are consistently chosen as pictures of the righteous, and ultimately point to Yeshua as the consummate ‘Good Shepherd’. God turned to Abel and his gift, but he did not turn to Cain and to his gift.

Q. What contrasts do these two occupations show us?

Q. Why was Cain’s offering unacceptable to the LORD?⁷

DISCUSS verses 6 & 7 – Whilst not accepting Cain’s offering, God asks him two rhetorical questions and immediately gives him the chance for moral rehabilitation. But, *“If you do not do well, sin⁸ lies at the door, and its desire is for you, but you should rule over it”.*

Q. What do these verses teach us about God, human nature, and our primary responsibility?

Q. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Try to see from two different angles. (4:9)

Q. What attitude do you detect in Cain’s response to the LORD? (4:13-16)

New Covenant Insight - Cain and Abel

Heb. 11:4 *By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had testimony given to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness with respect to his gifts; and through it he, being dead, still speaks.*

² I owe this insight to Julia Blum, author and professor at eTeacher Biblical Studies, Israel.

³ The bracketed words, “with the help of” (or something similar), found in many English translations, are not found in the original Hebrew text.

⁴ The word translated ‘Cain’ here, is translated ‘spear’ in 2 Sam 21:16.

⁵ Fruchtenbaum, A.G., Ariel’s Bible Commentary., p.115.

⁶ Lit. “At the end of days”, meaning “at a specifically appointed time.”

⁷ God looks on the heart. Psalm 51:17. See also Ecclesiastes 2:10-11

⁸ This is the first use of the word *sin* in Torah.

Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; refer to the righteous blood of Abel.

1Jn. 3:11-13 *For this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; unlike Cain, who was of the evil one, and killed his brother. **Why did he kill him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous.** Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you....*

Jude 1:11 *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain;*

In 1 John 3:12 Cain is the 'type' of all that is opposed to the sense of Godliness and brotherhood, those who seek to destroy the 'brother' whose righteous works are an *offence* to him. In the Jude passage he is introduced as the first and, in some respects, the most pronounced example of wickedness which the Old Testament offers – a portrayal of murderous envy of those who live by the impulse of the flesh in defiance of God.

Following are two of many NT verses which speak clearly of the two natures in man:

Galatians 6:8 - *For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

Romans 8:7-9 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

The New Seed

READ 4:25-26 - It was now evident to Eve that the first 'seed' she brought forth (Cain) was not the God-man she thought him to be. In apparent humility she says, *God has appointed me another seed instead of **Abel***. She named him *Seth* meaning 'appointed' or 'foundation'. Seth begot Enosh, whose name means "*frail man*", emphasizing his mortality and vulnerability. "*Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.*" This is a religious turning point, the beginning of regular public worship, as man recognizes his utter dependence upon the LORD who created him.

It is worthwhile here to look forward to chapter 5, verse 3, where it says *Adam lived 130, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.*

'After years of self-imposed abstinence and repentance Adam fathered Seth, resembling his better self. This is the first confirmation of the principle that "The place of the repentants who have struggled with evil and triumphed over it is greater than that of the righteous who remain vulnerable to sin."⁹ (Parable of Prodigal Son confirms this insight)

Without God's intervention, there was no hope of restoring the image God originally bequeathed upon mankind. But Paul says that Jesus was "the **image** of the invisible God." (Col 1:15)

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his **image** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Cor. 3:17-18

⁹ Munk, *The Call of Torah*, p.132.