

B'REISHEET { בְּרֵאשִׁית } (In the Beginning)

Genesis 1:1-6:8, Isaiah 42:5-43:10, Revelation 22:6-21

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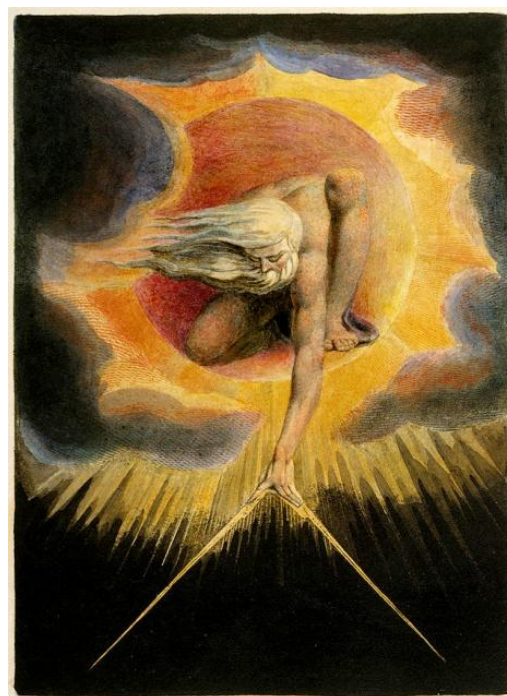
**“In the beginning (Brisheet), God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth...”
(Genesis 1:1)**

New Beginnings:

Isn't it wonderful to feel that we have been given a fresh start – an opportunity for a new beginning? With this first Scripture portion (parashah), we have just that. We begin once again our study of the Word of God, a never-ending life-giving cycle. Each time we study the Scriptures, even if we have read them many times before, the Holy Spirit always gives us new revelations.

So we can anticipate, with eager expectation, the new and wonderful things that He will show us as we seek to know more and more Truth.

“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your Torah.” (Psalm 119:18)



Ancient of Days [William Blake](#), 1794, Wikipedia

We have just finished celebrating the Fall Feasts and are now entering into a new season. This is a time of new beginnings. God is doing a new thing in many of our lives.

“For I am about to do a new thing. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.” (Isaiah 43:19)

No longer can we rely on the glory of what He has done in the past or the ways of living and being that we have become comfortable with. He is calling us out of our comfort zones and into this ‘*new thing*’. We must follow the cloud of His shechinah glory or be left behind. When the Spirit moves, we need to be willing to move with it (even when we don't know where we are going – yet!) His Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light to our path. (Psalms 119:105)

Living Bread & Living Word

Jewish people worldwide study the same portions of Scripture (called parashot) on the same Shabbat (Sabbath) each week, resulting in a beautiful unity upon which God pours out His blessing (Psalm 133). Many non-Jewish Messianic Believers and congregations are now also following this pattern and joining in this internationally unified Bible study. In the traditional Jewish system of reading through the Bible, the last feast celebrated, called Simchat Torah (Joy of the Torah), ends the cycle of readings and begins anew with Genesis (B'reisheet).

This reminds us that our study of the Word of God never comes to a conclusion, but is an ongoing feast from every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Just as we never want to stop eating the bread that perishes, even more so would we never want to stop eating the living bread that comes down from Heaven.

Yeshua said:

“I am the bread of life...This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever...” (John 6:48)

The Hebrew for bread of life is ‘**lechem chayim**’. Yeshua was born in the house of bread (Beit Lechem) usually called Bethlehem in English. We lose so much of the richness of Scriptures and prophecies with the translation from Hebrew to English. When we begin to understand Yeshua in his Hebraic, Jewish cultural and linguistic context, we will be greatly enriched.



A painting of Bethlehem, 1882

In the New Testament Gospel of John, the first word used is the same as in Genesis: B'reisheet (In the Beginning)...

“In the beginning (B'reisheet) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1-3,14)

Yeshua is the Living Word, the Torah manifested in the flesh, come to dwell amongst us. How can someone believe in Yeshua and at the same time reject the Torah? Some Christians have been taught that the Torah is not valid for them; that only the New Testament applies to disciples of Yeshua. But perhaps we forget that the only Word Yeshua Himself considered the Holy Scriptures were from the Torah.

The Word of God does not begin at the Gospel of Matthew, but ‘in the beginning’ (B’reisheet). Dismissing the Torah is like trying to build a structure without a firm foundation. If we want a solid faith that will withstand the winds and waves of the storms of life, then we need to build on the Rock – the entire Word of God, starting with the five books of Moses, the Hebrew prophets and writings.

So...let us start – at the very beginning:

“In the beginning (Breisheet בְּרֵאשִׁית), God (Elohim אֱלֹהִים) created (barah) the heavens and the earth...” (Genesis 1:1)

Already we see the plurality in the oneness of God in the first lines of the Bible. **אל** is the singular form of God. The ‘im’ ending **ים** always indicates a plurality. For example: ‘boy’ is ‘yeled’ **יֶלֶד** in Hebrew. The plural, boys, is ‘y’ladim’ **יְלָדִים**.

Other scriptures in this beginning parashah (scripture portion) also indicate a plurality.

“Let us make man (Adam) in our image, after our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26).



Creation of Light (engraving by Gustave Doré from the 1865 *La Sainte Bible*)

Both these words use the plural form (our – not my) in the Hebrew. When Adam and Chavah (Eve) ate the forbidden fruit, God said, **“The man has become as one of us...”** (Genesis 3:22).

The Hebrew could have read, ‘*The man has become like me*’, but it doesn’t. What is this telling us? Does it mean that there is more than one God? Absolutely not! The Hebrew grammar used here only indicates that there exists some kind of multi-faceted plurality even within the oneness of God.

The verb used for create, ‘barah’, **ברא** is a singular form. If there were really more than one entity involved, the verb used would also be plural, (baru), **בראו** but it is not.

Some anti-missionaries claim that the reason some Jewish people come to believe in Yeshua is because Christians have mistranslated the Bible into English to accommodate their Messianic beliefs. It is so important, then, that we have this knowledge of the holy tongue – Hebrew – and Old Testament Messianic Prophecies in order to reveal Yeshua to His own Jewish people.

From Tohu V'vohu (chaos) to 'Seder' (order)

Parashah Bereisheet opens with a dramatic, awe - inspiring narrative of the creation of our world. Through 31 verses and 469 words, the Word describes how God created a perfectly planned universe – from emptiness and chaos (called tohu v'vohu תהו וָבֹהוּ in Hebrew) to a delicate balance of beauty and order.

“Now the earth was in chaos (tohu v'vohu תהו וָבֹהוּ), and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:2)

Ruach Elohim רוח אֱלֹהִים (The Spirit of God) hovered over the waters (mayim) as God separated the light from the darkness and land from water. He created vegetation and creatures – fish of the sea and birds of the air as well as land animals.

The first chapter of Genesis written on an egg in the Israel Museum



We cannot even take in the awesomeness and majesty of God's creations. It is just so wonderful, and yet we so often get lost in the 'same old, same old' of everyday life, especially if we live in an urban area, so that we lose this sense of awe and wonder at all the beauty that God has created.

There are so many incredibly beautiful places in the world. At the point of this writing, we are blessed to live in a small village on top of a mountain in the hills of Judea (Harei Yehudah) in the Land of Israel.



As I walked around our village and thought about this story of Creation, I was again lost in wonder, as I gazed at the beautiful view over the valley.



The view from our back yard

As I walked, I intentionally stopped to really notice the glorious array of colors adorning the beautiful flowers here – in a place that was once completely barren and devoid of life. It is both a miracle and a sign to the nations (and to each one of us personally) of God’s mercy to restore that which has been ruined through sin. God looked at everything He had made and declared it good; but God was not quite finished yet. On the sixth and final day of creation, God brought forth the first human being – Adam אָדָם – out of the dust of the earth (Adamah) אֲדָמָה.



“Then the LORD God formed man (Adam) of the dust of the ground (adamah), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”
(Genesis 2:7)

Jewish mystics point out the Hebrew root word, dam, דָם (blood), is contained within the name of the first ‘man’ on earth. It took the breath of God to transform Adam into a ‘living soul’ - a being of flesh and blood.

“And God created man (Adam אָדָם) in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male (zachar) and female (nikeivah) He created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

Created in His Image

Humankind – both male and female were created in the very image and likeness of God. Hebrew uses the word b'tzelmo **בצלמו** (in His image). The related Hebrew word 'l'tzalem' is used in Hebrew meaning 'to take a photograph or make a photocopy'.



The Creation of Adam (fresco circa 1509 by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel)

Yes, there is a very definite family resemblance between us and our Heavenly Abba (Dad). In fact, the Hebrew word Tzel, **צל**, means shade or shadow. Our image is so close to God's it is like a '*shadow*' of His likeness. Wow!

Although we may stand in awe at the wonder of God's creations in nature, we have a tendency to criticize and put ourselves (or others) down - to see only our faults, weaknesses and supposed imperfections. We too often forget that we are God's children, created in His image. We are fearfully and wonderfully made¹; therefore we don't need to reject ourselves. We can love and accept ourselves as we are – the pinnacle of God's creations.

Just as God delighted in the creative process, so is there an innate quality within each and every human being to for some sort of creative expression as well. It may be music, art, dance, writing, drama, filmmaking or even cooking – but we all love to create - even if this creative urge is all too often stifled as adults due to the cares and concerns of life. We need to make the time for these create pursuits, for it is part of our God-given nature.

How did God create the universe? He spoke the whole world into existence with words. Each act of creation began with, **“And God said...”**

The Power of the Spoken Word

“And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light.” (Genesis 1:3)

With a word, God spoke light into a world of darkness and chaos. It was with His words that God created the Heavens and the Earth:

“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.” (Psalm 33:6)



¹ Psalm 139:14

Calling Things into Existence

God spoke and the entire universe was created: **“For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”** (Psalm 33:9)

The spoken word is extremely powerful! Since we are created in the image of God, we are therefore also creative beings just as He is creative. Although we are not gods, as some in the New Age movement claim, we have still been given creative power in our words – even as the Bible tells us - the power of life or death is in the tongue! (Proverbs 18:21)



The First Day of Creation (woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld from the 1860 *Die Bibel in Bildern*)

God created something out of nothing with His words. He has also given us the ability to ‘call forth those things which are not as if they are...’ Abraham acted in faith when he stood in the presence of God, who gives life to the dead and **“calls into existence things that don't yet exist.”** (Romans 4:17)

When we speak faith-filled words into our problems and situations, we bring light, order and peace. We participate in creating these things that we hope for but don't yet see. **“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”** (Hebrews 11:1)

The alternative is also true. If we call forth darkness and further chaos by speaking negative, destructive words, we may create the very thing that we hate or fear. Job said, **“For the thing which I fear comes on me; that which I am afraid of comes to me.”** (Job 3:25)

God is always listening to the words we speak. He told the Israelites that He would give them that which they had spoken in His hearing, what they had declared with their own words, even if that meant that they would all die in the wilderness.

‘As I live,’ says the LORD, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses will fall in this wilderness,’ (Numbers 14:28-29)

Keeping this in mind, let us carefully guard our mouth and watch our words – for they have the power to create good things in our lives, or to cause our destruction. The Word of God spoken in faith is powerful and effective to create light in the darkness, and order out of chaos. If we really ‘get this’, it will change our life!

We must begin to understand the power that God has given us through our thoughts and words; and then we can begin to bring them into line with God's word in order to bring

more light into our lives and those around us. Each thought we think and word we speak is a seed that we plant in the garden of our lives. We can plant good seeds that will bring forth fruit and flowers, or we may choose to plant rotten seeds that produce nasty weeds.

We cannot expect instant results, but must nourish and water that seed with our faith, with the water of God's Word, patiently waiting to see it come to pass. Just as the farmer who plants his seeds does not immediately dig around in the dirt, but patiently waits for the expected harvest, so must we demonstrate faith and patience in order to see the promises of God come to pass in our life.

“We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.” (Hebrews 6:12)

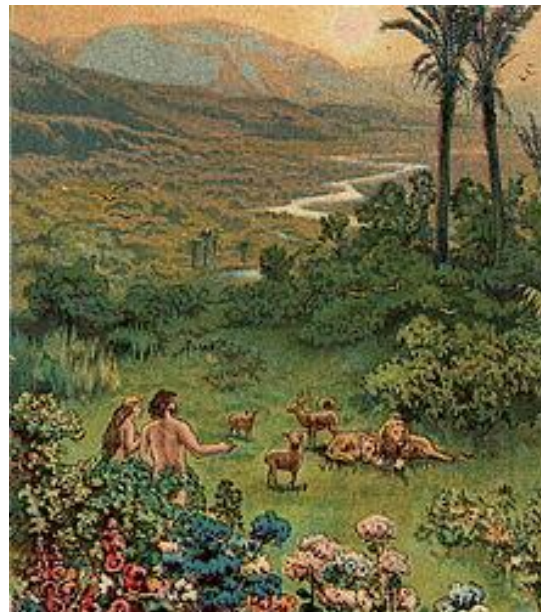
Sometimes we sincerely want to speak light and truth and love, but out of our mouths come forth the same negative, critical, complaining garbage as always. We may have inherited these negative traits from either or both sides of our families, or even from prior generations.

To speak negatively, either about ourself or others is to utter a curse. The negative comment we make about another child of God will boomerang back upon us. Only Yeshua can break these curses and generational sins. **“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”** (John 8:36)

The Word tell us that no man can tame the tongue;² however when we ask for God's help in guarding our mouth, He will help us. It is out of our heart that these negative words come forth, so this is really a heart issue. If we confess these sins and ask Yeshua to set our mind and heart free from negative, critical thinking, and redeem our mouths from unclean speech or idle words, He will help us as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit at work in us.

Tov Me'od (Very Good)

Breisheet describes the beauty and perfection with which God created the world in the Garden of Eden (Gan Eden). He looked at everything He had created and called it all good (**tov**); but the creation of mankind (man and woman) He called 'very good' (**tov meod**). Everything in God's world worked perfectly and everything made perfect sense. In this pristine environment in the beginning of time on earth, there was peace and harmony between every living thing that God created.



The Garden of Eden (illustration from Bible card published 1906 by the Providence Lithograph Company)

² James 3:8

The Seventh Day Sabbath

After six days of an active creating process, God instituted the seventh day Sabbath (Shabbat) **שבת** as a time to cease from all of our labors and simply to rest and be refreshed.

“And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which God in creating had made.”
(Genesis 2:2,3)

This holy day of rest, Shabbat, is so important to God for the sake of mankind that He included it in the Ten Commandments, chiselling these words into the stone tablets:



The Sabbath (woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld)

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.

For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:8-11)

Ezer K’negdo

God then placed man (ish) in the Garden of Eden and gave him the work of tending and guarding the garden. Gardening was man’s first occupation. No wonder we love it so much. God then realized that it was not good for Adam to be alone, therefore God created a helpmeet for the man. He brought forth Chava (Eve) out of the rib of the man.

“And the LORD God said: ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.’” (Genesis 2:18)

In Hebrew, the word used for the role of a woman is ‘ezer k’negdo’. Literally, it means a ‘helper against him’.

Being placed in the role of a helper is no less important or inferior than the role of the Holy Spirit, who is called ‘The Helper’. A woman, however, is not to be a doormat; there are times when she must stand in opposition to her man if what he is planning to do is not wise.

We may look at the example of Haman's wife in the book of Esther who tried to warn her husband that his attempts to destroy Mordechai would never succeed because he was of Jewish origin. To his detriment, Haman, the anti-Semite did not listen to his 'ezer k'negdo'.

It is God, Himself, who declared that it is not good for a man to be alone; celibacy is contrary to nature. Therefore it is no shame for a man to admit he is desiring a godly wife; it is not a '*concession to our human weakness*' but God's original plan even in the perfection of the Garden of Eden where Adam had unbroken fellowship with God.

He saw man's need for a helper, counterpart, and companion; therefore God put Adam into a deep sleep and took from out of his rib the woman.

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from the man, He made into a woman, and brought her unto the man.” (Genesis 2:21& 22)



The Creation of Eve (1792 Russian [Lubok](#) woodcut)

A second century Jewish sage, Dosetai ben Yannai, wrote that it is natural for a man to woo a woman. Why? Because he seeks for that which he has lost (his rib).

In Hebrew, a man is called 'ish' איש and a woman 'isha', אישה - the feminine form of ish. God uses this term when He woos Israel to Himself and joins Himself to her in an everlasting covenant.

"It will come about in that day," declares the LORD, "That you will call Me 'Ishi' (my man) and will no longer call Me 'Baali'." (Hosea 2:16)

Here the Word of God uses a Hebrew word play: **ba'ali**, means 'my Lord or my master' but also my owner. Ba'al is also the name of a false god. God no longer wants Israel to serve Him out of fear but out of love – like that of a woman for her husband.

God is utterly concerned with our intimate relationships - with Him and with one another as well. He wants our relationships to be borne of love and devotion, not a relationship ruled through domination, control and coercion.

Judaism has a sensitivity for finding mates for singles in a way that is uncommon in the non-Jewish world. For this reason, the concept of shidduchim (matchmaking) attempts to

bring Jewish men and women together for the purpose of marriage. To create a successful 'shidduch' is considered a great mitzvah (good deed) in Judaism.

In marriage, the man and woman are to become one (echad), just as Elohim is one (echad) – in perfect relationship and harmony. Of course we know for this to take place requires a miracle. God must be the foundation of every marriage in order for it to survive the trials of life and succeed in bringing glory to Adonai.

The Hebrew language gives us an interesting word picture of what happens when God is left out of the relationship between a man and woman:

The Hebrew word for 'man' or 'husband' is 'ish' איש. The word for 'woman' or 'wife' in Hebrew is 'ishah' אישה. One of the names of God is 'Yah' יה. It consists of two Hebrew letters: yud י and hey ה. If we remove the letter 'yud' י from the man and the letter 'hey' ה from the woman, then all we are left with is the Hebrew word 'esh' אש which means 'fire'. If God is removed from the relationship between a husband and wife – watch out! There's going to be a whole lot of fiery combustion going on! ☺



Timothy & Victoria on their wedding

What is the Biblically stated purpose for God to have created the man and woman to become one (echad)? It is to produce Godly offspring to carry on the faith.³ **“But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks Godly offspring.”** (Malachi 2:15)

Be Fruitful and Multiply

God commanded us in the beginning to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). In the Rabbinic codes, this is the first of the 613 commandments of the Torah. Children, in Judaism, are central to the purpose of marriage.

Abraham cried, *“O Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing that I go childless?”* (Genesis 15:2) Why was Abraham so devastated that he did not have a child? Barrenness was considered a curse in the context of this Middle Eastern culture as demonstrated by Hannah, Sarah, and Rachel in the Bible.

³ For those who are childless, God can provide spiritual children to raise up in the faith

Children are a Blessing from the Lord

In Judaism, the child is to be considered the highest of human treasures. Jewish infant mortality is everywhere lower than the non-Jewish – often only one-half of that among the general population.⁴

Some parents might at times feel overwhelmed by the inevitable mess, demands, and challenges that children bring to our lives. But we are reminded that God has commanded us to multiply and so His grace will be sufficient for each parent.

One of the things that God has put into better order in my life is an appreciation for how crucial our role as parents is to Him. The raising up of our children right is not an ‘aside’ when we have time apart from our ‘real work’. Children are a blessing from the Lord; and when we discipline them properly they will give us rest, peace, and joy.

The same Holy Spirit that hovered over the waters is our helper. And He delights in helping mothers and fathers with their children when we ask for His help and wisdom – in each and every situation. Rather than give in to stress and despair over our children, we can just ask for the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit and He is faithful.

Yeshua did not shoo away the children because He had so many ‘important things to do’ as His disciples assumed, but He said to bring the children to Him and He blessed them. He told us that whoever received a little child in His name, receives Him. So we must not feel that we are not doing anything for the Lord when what we are doing is being faithful to guard and keep ‘His fruit’.

Although the Word of God promises that children are a ‘blessing from the Lord’ and blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them⁵; we also have a part to play in whether or not our children feel like a blessing to us or a miserable burden.

God has given us a great deal of instruction in His Word as to how to raise up children who will be a blessing to us and to society; but if we disregard God’s child-rearing advice, we cannot blame Him (or the child) when things turn out miserably.

“A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom, but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother.” (Proverbs 29:15)

A neglected child can end up bringing shame and disgrace upon his or her family. We have a big job ahead of us to impart wisdom to our children; but the alternative is definitely not fun for anyone! A foolish, undisciplined child can send the stoutest father running to the nearest vasectomy clinic. **“A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.”** (Proverbs 10:1)

What I want to know is – why is it always the mother that gets the grief and shame?? ☺

⁴ Hertz, Dr. J.H., On Marriage, Divorce and the Position of Women in Judaism, P; 930

⁵ Psalm 127:3-5

Created to be a Helpmeet



And Orthodox Jewish Wedding www.goisrael.com

Marriages and families seem to be going through times of testing and adjustments. Divorce is commonplace, even amongst Believers. God wants to bring our relationships into right order, not remaining in the way our deceitful heart desires.

A wife was created to be the helpmeet to her husband, not the other way around. So many young women are being brought up to believe that it is somehow degrading to be the helper of her husband. They think that he should be serving and helping her!

The balance to this equation is that the husband is to love his wife as his own flesh, since she was created from the rib of the man.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as also the Messiah is head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Messiah, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as the Messiah also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his

wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes, just as the Lord does the church...

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh (basar echad). This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Messiah and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” (Ephesians 5:22-33)

This expresses the ideal holiness and sanctity of marriage in God’s sight. This intimate relationship between husband and wife should demonstrate to the world the relationship of the Messiah to His people. His banner over us is love (Song of Solomon 2:4).

Some of us have an intellectual knowledge of God and His word but have yet to receive a greater revelation of His everlasting love for us personally and individually.

The rabbinic term for marriage is ‘kidushin’ which means ‘sanctification’. Our love and respect for one another, as husband and wife, is to reflect the holiness of God. But all too often, the flesh and sin destroy what was God’s original intention.

It is the sin of selfishness that usually destroys a marriage. We can be followers of the Messiah and still be bound to selfishness. May we ask also for Yeshua to set us free from selfishness and rebellion, that we may enjoy the one flesh marriage relationship of love, holiness and harmony that He intended.

From Grace to Disgrace

Adam and Chava (Eve) lived in a beautiful garden called Gan Eden. But their sin caused them to be cast out into the difficult world in which we now must labour with sweat and travail in pain. Unfortunately, due to a crafty (arom) serpent’s trickery, which caused Chavah (Eve) to stumble into sin and drag Adam along with her, we went from grace to disgrace in a single day!

Adam and Eve Driven from Paradise (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))



Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent; and men and women have been pointing the finger at one another ever since. For the first time in human history, we see the emergence of shame; and with shame came forth a fear of God's wrath. In his utter humiliation, Adam hid amongst the trees, have become aware that he was naked.



God's Curse (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

So when Adam said that he hid himself from God and was afraid because he was naked, he may also have been saying that not only was he now aware that he was naked (arom ערום); but he now knew that the wickedness of the serpent had become part of him. Adam had become arom ערום like the serpent! And now we all suffer from this original sin and need a Savior to set us free.

“So he (Adam) said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked (arom ערום); and I hid myself.” (Genesis 3:10)

From their Utopian, sheltered, innocent existence in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Chavah were unceremoniously thrust into a cruel and unforgiving world cursed with hardship and pain.

God had created a beautiful and perfect world for His creations to enjoy; but sin marred that magnificence. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve, all of their children also became slaves to sin, and today we still live in a fallen world of sin and violence. But there is hope in Yeshua the Messiah who has redeemed us from the curse and from sin.

The Eden Diet

It is interesting that the first sin dealt with the appetites of the man and woman. They could not believe that God would deny them something that looked so delicious to eat. They instead listened to the serpent that caused them to doubt the validity of God's clearly outlined word.

Today, a similar occurrence takes place among many of God's people who claim to



believe His word. In it, God clearly writes of which creatures we may consider as food, and which are forbidden to us⁶.

But so many listen, instead, to the slick voice that says, “*O come on, God didn’t really say you couldn’t eat that; you won’t really suffer...*” Some of God’s people protest, “*But I love the taste of bacon and shrimp – God couldn’t possibly want me to stop eating something so delicious, could He?*”

And so, many people break God’s instructions in the matter of our diet and suffer various health problems and perhaps spiritual maladies as a result. In the Garden of Eden, God gave us every green herb for food.⁷ If we would eat more of what God actually calls ‘food’ and less of what just appeals to our senses, we would likely enjoy better health.

Corruption and Violence

The rest of the parashah describes the growth of sin and violence among the children of men. It is shocking to realize how quickly what began as something perfect and beautiful deteriorates so quickly and dramatically into moral degeneracy, even to the point of brother murdering brother (Cain and Abel). This first murder in the Bible is described in the fourth chapter of Genesis.



Cain Kills His Brother Abel (woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld from the 1860 *Die Bibel in Bildern*)

God said that Abel’s blood cried out to Him from the ground. It brought a curse on Cain for shedding his brother’s blood.

“And He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you *are* cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.” (Genesis 4:10 & 11)

This is very relevant to the situation in the Middle East even today where Palestinians are randomly stabbing, shooting and killing Jews on the streets of Israel. Their innocent blood cries out to God from the ground! The prophet Ezekiel spoke of the judgment that would come upon the descendants of Edom (Esau) for shedding the blood of the children of Jacob (Israel).

⁶ Leviticus chapter 11

⁷ Genesis 1:30

The Blood of Abel Cries out

“Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed *the blood of* the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity *came to an end*, therefore, *as I live*,” says the Lord GOD, “I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; since you have not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue you. “ (Ezekiel 35:5-6)



Eitam & Na'ama Henkin were murdered in front of their 4 children by Palestinian terrorists

How can we find any hope in this terrible situation? We are being killed just for being Jews; and they are being cursed for their hatred of us – for shedding the innocent blood of the children of Jacob. What is the answer to this ancient hatred? It is only found in Yeshua. We have heard testimonies of Palestinians who were raised to hate the Jews and Israel only to have this hatred replaced by fervent love once they gave their hearts to Yeshua the Messiah.

We are told in the book of Hebrews that the ‘blood of sprinkling’ speaks ‘better things’ than the blood of Abel. “...**to Yeshua the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.**” (Hebrews 12:24)

What does this mean? Yeshua’s blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat when He gave His life for us on the cross; and His blood also cries out to God; but instead of crying out for justice and vengeance (as did Abel’s), Yeshua’s blood cries out, “*Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing.*”

May we have this same spirit of forgiveness that Yeshua demonstrated. Rather than fighting hatred with more hatred; may we will overcome evil with good and pray for our enemies even while they hate us and seek to kill us.

Descent into Darkness

Sometimes we may also wonder how something that started out so perfect and beautiful could end up in such disaster and destruction. Probably most every person who has been divorced has asked themselves this question.

Only six chapters into the book of Breisheet (Genesis), mankind had descended to such depths of evil and violence that God's heart broke. He grieved and regretted ever creating mankind.

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.” (Genesis 6:5-6)

Perhaps we think that we are in a similar situation today. The good news is that none of this comes as a surprise to God. Even before the foundations of the earth were laid, God had a plan for our redemption. God sent His one and only son, Yeshua, to pay the penalty for all of our sins.



The Earth Was Corrupt before God and Filled with Violence (illustration from the 1728 Figures de la Bible)

“Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Messiah Yeshua who gave himself for us *to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*” (Titus 2:13-14)

Redemption and Restoration

The stated mission of Israel is to rescue the world from its moral degeneracy through knowledge of the Torah, God's word. Also through the Jews came the Messiah, Yeshua, whose power transforms us from within. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds with the truth of God's word.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2)

It is the bondage to that sin nature that we have inherited from Adam and Chava (Eve) from which Yeshua (Jesus) came to set us free, no longer to be slaves to sin but to righteousness.

Sometimes sins have been committed by those in our generational lines who are now deceased. We may have no knowledge of these sins (ie. the shedding of innocent blood), and yet we still suffer the consequences.

In 2 Samuel 21 there was a famine in the land for three years. David inquired of the Lord as to its cause and the Lord answered, *“It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites.”* Saul was already dead, but this innocent blood cried out to God from the ground and demanded vengeance.

Those who shed innocent blood, as in abortion, bring upon themselves and their descendants a curse. Many of us have abortion in our family history somewhere along the line; but the blood of Yeshua can break every curse!

David asked of the Gibeonites how he could atone for this sin of Saul’s. *“With what shall I make atonement?”* The Gibeonites demanded the blood of seven of Saul’s descendants. When David complied with their request, atonement was accepted. **“And after that God heeded the prayer for the land.”** (2 Samuel 21:14)

Those of us who have received Yeshua as our Savior know that His blood has paid the price for all sin, but we need to offer up His blood as atonement for the sin of shedding innocent blood and all the sins of our forefathers, that the curses over our lives may be broken.

Many of us have experienced rejection and this continues to work destruction in our lives. We may think we are healed until a new rejection comes up and opens all the festering wounds which were never completely healed. YHVH יהוה is our healer (YHVH Rophe) – the Great Physician. We may ask Him to heal us completely – body, mind, soul and spirit – that every unclean spirit of death and destruction must flee in His name.

The scripture in Acts 4:12, “There is no other name under heaven by which men may be saved.” is actually a mistranslation. Both the Hebrew and the context are speaking of healing. It should read,

“There is no other name under heaven by which mankind (Adam) may be healed!” Halleluyah!

A LIGHT UNTO THE GENTILES (NATIONS)

God has rescued us from the Kingdom of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of Light – of His beloved son, Yeshua. He is a light and a covenant, not only for Jewish people, but for all people of every tongue, tribe and nation.



The Knesset Menorah

Through the Prophet, Isaiah, the Lord says of the Messiah,

"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)

When Yeshua was born, they prophesied that the child would become, **"A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."** (Luke 2:32)

Yeshua in Breisheet (In the Beginning)

There is a mystery revealed in the first chapter of the book of Breisheet. In the second verse of Genesis, we read that the RUACH (wind or spirit) of God was present in the beginning, hovering over the waters.

We know that Yeshua was also present with God 'in the beginning' and co-creator with Elohim: **"For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him."** (Colossians 1:16)

The Fourth Day of Creation (woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld from the 1860 Die Bibel in Bildern)



But where do we find Yeshua in the opening Scriptures of Breisheet? On the very first day of creation, God brought the Light into the world. How can there be light since as yet, God had not yet created the sun or moon or stars to shine forth their light? Here, on the very first day of creation, we find Yeshua – for He is the Light of the world.

Yeshua is the aleph and the tav, the beginning and the end. He is the light at the beginning of creation and the light at the end.

When God destroys this present earth and creates a New Jerusalem, there will be no need for the sun and moon and stars to illuminate the earth, for Yeshua again will be the light.



“But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light...” (Revelation 21:22-24)

Israel has contributed so much to the world in every science, medicine, literature, art, music and virtually every field of endeavor. In this she has been fulfilling her mission to be a Light to the nations. In a spiritual sense, however, Israel has fallen short; and yet through the Jews came the Messiah, Yeshua, whose power transforms us from within.

He rescues us from the Kingdom of darkness and transfers us into the kingdom of Light. He is a light and a covenant, not only for Jewish people, but for all peoples of every tongue, tribe and race.

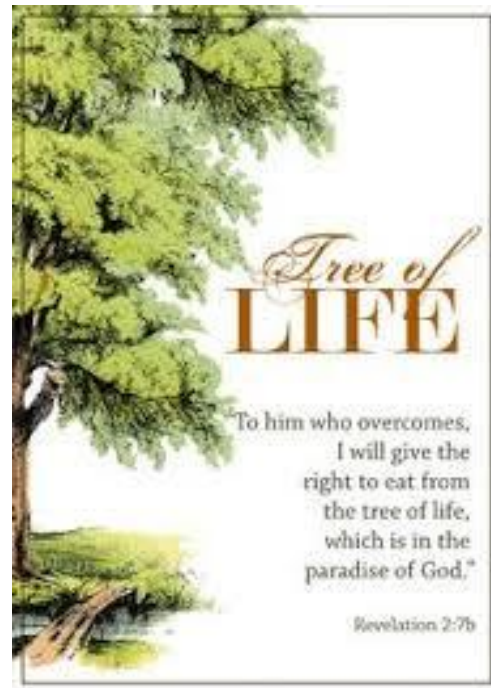
“I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee, and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison –house.” (Isaiah 42:6-7)

Yeshua accepted this as His mission and proclaimed His Messiahship when He read this from the Torah in the synagogue on the Sabbath (as was his custom). (Luke 4:16-19)

The purpose of our covenant with Elohim through the Messiah Yeshua, is to restore our relationship with God, and in the end, to bringing us back into Gan Eden, Paradise, a place of eternal life and peace.

Yeshua made this promise even to the thief who hung, crucified, next to him, “Then he said, **“Yeshua, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”** (Luke 23:42-43)

When Adam and Eve sinned, they were barred from access into the beautiful Garden of Eden (Gan Eden) by cherubim standing guard at the gates with flaming swords, keeping man away from the tree of life.⁸ In the restored Gan Eden, however, we will see with our own eyes the pure river of water and the trees of life that line its sides (Revelation 22:1-3)



Let us praise, worship and thank Yeshua that though we were made sinners through the disobedience of one man – Adam – we have been made righteous through the obedience of the Messiah. Halleluyah!

⁸ Genesis 3:24

“For just as through the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:19)

The God of Israel, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the one true God, Elohim, is worthy of all honor and glory; for He is the Great Creator of the entire universe.

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)



Garden of Eden www.freehdw.com

About the Author:

Hannah Nesher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching Christians about the Jewish roots of their faith.



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