GENESIS
A DEEP DIVE

ADAM TO NOAH

THE EDEN STORY - PART 3 (GENESIS 3:1-24)

GENESIS 3: 1-24

- Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ” “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

GENESIS 3: 1-24

- When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

GENESIS 3: 1-24

- He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

GENESIS 3: 1-24

- “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’

GENESIS 3: 1-24

- “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

GENESIS 3: 1-24

- And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

THE SHREWD, TALKING SNAKE

- Genesis 3:1 tells us that “the snake is more shrewd than any beast of the field.” Does this shrewdness imply that the snake is evil?
- “The snake’s story is told here from the gift of wisdom to rebellion leading to curse and dishonor. It’s parallel to the human’s story... Both characters have their fail moments here.”

Translation and Literary Design: Genesis 3:1-7

2:25 *And the* **two** *of them were* **naked** *(ערום),* **the human** *and his* **woman**, *and they were not ashamed.*
3:1 *Now the snake was more* **shrewd** *(ערום) than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made.*

Naked and Unashamed

A	a		*And it [the snake] said to the woman,*
		b	*"Indeed, has God said,*
			'You shall not eat from any **tree of the garden***'?"*
B	a		*2 And the woman said to the snake,*
			"From the fruit of the **trees of the garden** *we may eat;*
	b		*3 but from the fruit of* **the tree** *which is in the middle* **of the garden**,
			God has said,
	c		*'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or* ***you will die****.' "*
A	a		*4 And the snake said to the woman,*
			*"**You surely will not die**!*
		b	*5 For God knows*
			that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened,
	c		*and you will be like elohim, knowers of good and bad."*

The Dialogue

A			*6 And the woman saw that the tree was good for eating,*
B			*and that it was desirable to the eyes,*
C			*and that the tree was desirable to make one wise,*
D			*and she took from its fruit and she ate;*
D′			*and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*
C′			*7 and the eyes of both of them were opened,*

The Act

B′	*and they knew that they were* **naked** *(ערום);*
A′	*and they sewed leaves of fig tree together and made themselves loin coverings.*

Naked and Ashamed

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Naked and Ashamed

NAKED AND UNASHAMED AND SHREWD

- This potent narrative detail is offered to describe the new ideal state of the human creature, who is now a unified plurality.
- Nakedness in the biblical world is a state of ultimate vulnerability.

NAKED AND UNASHAMED AND SHREWD

- To be naked outside of the garden ideal is to be exposed to the leering eyes of non-trusted people and is associated with humiliation and shame (see Isaiah 20:2-4; Hosea 2:5; Amos 2:16).
- To be naked and unashamed is an image of pure trust, openness, vulnerability, and safety.

NAKED AND UNASHAMED AND SHREWD

- “Naked and unashamed” is a kind of commentary on “the two becomes one flesh.”
- When one is truly unified with another, there is no need for self-protection or projection of a false self.

NAKED AND UNASHAMED AND SHREWD

- Notice the wordplay between human nakedness (Heb. ‘arom) and the snake’s “shrewdness” (Heb. ‘arum). It is precisely this characteristic of the snake that will transform the humans’ nakedness from vulnerability into shame.

A SHREWD, TALKING SNAKE

- The character of the snake is a rich and dense narrative image with many layers of meaning. There are two narrative descriptors in Genesis 3:1.
- “Shrewd” or “crafty”: Hebrew ‘arum (ערום)
- This word is morally neutral, as it can describe the righteous and wise in the book of Proverbs.

PROVERBS 22:3 (NASB95)

- The ‘**arum** sees the evil and hides himself, but the naive go on, and are punished for it.

PROVERBS 12:16 (NIV)

- Fools show their annoyance at once, but the ‘**arum** overlook an insult.

PROVERBS 14:15 (NASB95)

- The naive believes everything, but the **‘arum** considers his steps.

SHREWD, CRAFTY

- When the word is used of people with questionable character, the nuance of “crafty” is evident.

PSALM 83:2-3 (NIV)

- See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads. With ‘**ormah** they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish.

JOB 5:12-13 (NIV)

- He thwarts the plans of the ‘**arum**, so that their hands achieve no success. He catches the wise in their ‘**ormah**, and the schemes of the wily are swept away.

SHREWD, CRAFTY (‘ARUM)

- [The ‘arum] is one who “conceal what they feel and what they know (Prov 12:16, 23). They esteem knowledge and plan how to use it in achieving their objectives (Prov 13:16; 14:8, 18); they do not believe everything that they hear (Prov 14:15); and they know how to avoid trouble and punishment (Prov 22:3; 27:12).

SHREWD, CRAFTY (‘ARUM)

- In sum they are shrewd and calculating, willing to bend and torture the limits of acceptable behavior but not to cross the line into illegalities. They may be unpleasant and purposely misleading in speech but are not out-and-out liars (Josh 9:4; 1 Sam 23:22). They know how to read people and situations and how to turn their readings to advantage. A keen wit and a rapier tongue are their tools.” — ZIONY ZEVIT, WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN? P. 163.

SHREWD, CRAFTY (‘ARUM)

- Notice the wordplay between the snake’s introduction and its final destiny in 3:14

3:1	And the snake was *shrewd* (ערום) *more than every animal of the field* (מכל חית השדה).
3:14	You are *cursed* (ארור) *more than* every beast and *every animal of the field* (מכל חית השדה).

SHREWD, CRAFTY (‘ARUM)

- The shrewdness of the snake is a portrait of a creature endowed with the blessing of wisdom, who then abuses that power for selfish ends.

REFLECTION QUOTE

- “Although it is assumed by all the English translations that ערום has a negative sense (“crafty”) in Genesis 3:1, a closer examination suggests otherwise. The description of the serpent commences with its being “more prudent (‘arum) than all the creatures of the field” (Genesis 3:1), and after having tempted Eve, concludes with its being “more cursed (’arur) than all the creatures of the field (3:14).

REFLECTION QUOTE

- The two lines are nearly identical in Hebrew, suggesting an intentional contrast between them: the cursed serpent is a negative contrast to an initially positive shrewd serpent.

REFLECTION QUOTE

- Not only does “prudent” make more sense of the narrative flow of events, it also distances God from any responsibility with respect to the origin of evil. God did not make a ‘crafty’ creature; he made a wise creature. The serpent’s “prudence” may even be a sign of God’s special favor toward the serpent above the other animals.

REFLECTION QUOTE

- The serpent's decision to use its prudence for evil intentions, however, resulted in a fall from divine favor to eternal humiliation, and this offers a solution to the age-old question of the serpent's (and Satan's) fall. When did the serpent rebel and fall? It "fell" in Genesis 3. Thus, Genesis 3 depicts the fall of Adam, and Eve, and the serpent." — SETH POSTELL, ADAM AS ISRAEL, 123.

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SNAKE AND THE WOMAN

- The dialogue is designed in three steps:
- Notice how the snake first twists the divine command of 2:16-17, so that God's generosity ("eat from all the trees of the garden") is portrayed as protective scarcity (God not wanting to share wisdom/ power).
- His first tactic is to undermine God's character by creating an easy opportunity for correction.

a b c	*And it [the snake] said to the woman,* *"Indeed,* **has God said,** *'You* **shall not eat** ***from any*** **tree of the garden***'?"*	THE SNAKE
a b c	[2]*And the woman said to the snake,* *"**From the fruit** of the **trees of the garden** **we may eat**;* [3]*but **from the fruit** of **the tree** which is in the middle **of the garden**,* **God has said,** *'You* **shall not eat** *from it or touch it, or* ***you will die***.*' "*	THE WOMAN
a b c	[4]*And the snake said to the woman,* ***"You surely will not die!*** [5]*For* **God knows** *that in the day* **you eat** ***from it*** *your eyes will be opened,* *and you will be like elohim, knowers of good and bad."*	THE SNAKE

SNAKE – THE FIRST CON MAN

- “The serpent’s obvious inaccuracy in his rendition of God’s prohibition sounds like cunning or lack of subtlety. In fact, it is a well-known trick of the con-man to appear stupid to put others in a position of sham superiority. Any hustler knows that she better start by losing some games and give the impression to others that they will be easy winners.” — ANDRE LACOQUE, THE TRIAL OF INNOCENCE: ADAM, EVE, AND THE YAHWIST, 145.

THE DIALOGUE – SNAKE-WOMAN- SNAKE

- The woman's response is to correct the snake, clarifying that God invited them to eat from all of the garden trees except one. The snake has directed the conversation so that the single prohibition now becomes the focus. She first provides God's rationale for avoiding the tree: choosing to eat from it will constitute an act of rebellious autonomy, taking into one's own hands the wisdom and authority to discern between good and bad.

THE DIALOGUE – SNAKE-WOMAN- SNAKE

- The snake's response is to offer an alternative interpretation of both God's words and his intentions. God is actually withholding an ultimate good from his creatures, preventing them from becoming "like Elohim."

THE NARRATIVE OF THE WOMAN AND MAN'S ACTIONS IS PRECISELY DESIGN AS AN INVERTED SYMMETRY

- What the woman "sees" is filled out in three steps:
- 1. "And she saw that [it]… was good":
- This is in deliberate contrast to God's "seeing that it is good" seven times over in Genesis 1:1-2:3.

THE NARRATIVE OF THE WOMAN AND MAN'S ACTIONS IS PRECISELY DESIGN AS AN INVERTED SYMMETRY

- 2. "Desirable (הואת) to the eyes": What the woman sees generates desire. She "wants" now the thing that will kill her because she has embraced the snake's alternate narrative. Instead of realizing her true desire will only be fulfilled in trusting God and eating from the tree of life (see Proverbs 13:12), she mistakes the tree's beauty for the Creator to which it points.

THE NARRATIVE OF THE WOMAN AND MAN'S ACTIONS IS PRECISELY DESIGN AS AN INVERTED SYMMETRY

- 3. "Desirable (" חמדto covet") for becoming wise" (שכל):
- By embracing the snake's interpretation of the tree, she sees the knowing of good and bad as desirable and a path to true wisdom.
- In reality, it is the path of folly that will lead to death.

REFLECTIONS

- “Precisely at this point the author raises the issue of becoming ”wise”: ”And the woman saw that the tree was . . . also desirable for gaining wisdom” (3:6). Thus, the temptation is not presented as a general rebellion from God‘s authority. Rather, it is portrayed as a quest for wisdom and ”the good” apart from God‘s provision.” — JOHN H. SAILHAMER, THE PENTATEUCH AS NARRATIVE: A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY, P. 104.

REFLECTIONS

- The snake was not lying about “the eyes being opened” but about what kind of enlightenment would result. The humans become aware of their own nakedness and vulnerability with each other, and so hide their bodies from one another.
- Their folly and rebellion was caused by the idolatrous desire of a forbidden tree, so now the humans become like trees, covering their bodies with leaves.

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

- What are your thoughts about this so far?
- Who was created last in Genesis 1, humans or animals? What about in Genesis 2? Was it the animals or the woman?
- “By the time you work through just Genesis and you come back and read this, we are meant to see a spiritual being in disguise, deceiving, failing along with the humans, abusing his wisdom and God-given place in creation, and the humans follow suit.”

THE IDENTITY OF THE SNAKE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

- Genesis 3:1 Now the snake (Heb. nakhash / נחש) was more shrewd than any living creature of the field which the Lord God had made.
- The image of the snake as a “living creature of the field” is a dense narrative image that invites the reader to ponder from many angles. Here are some of the layers of meaning that seem intended by the author’s choice of the snake as the tempter.

THE IDENTITY OF THE SNAKE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

- 1. The Snake Among the Animals of Genesis 1
- On day six of Genesis 1, God populates the dry land with creatures: first the animals, and after that, humanity.

GENESIS 1:24-26

- And God said, “Let the land bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and **creeping things** and beasts of the land after their kind”; and it was so. God made the **living creatures** of the land after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that **creeps on the ground** after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

GENESIS 1:24-26

- And God said, “Let us make **human** in our image, according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over **every creeping thing** that creeps on the earth.”

THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST?

- The animals are called “the living creatures” (Heb. khayyot, תויח) and specified by rough categories: domesticated animals, “creepers” (the wild ones that run and hide), and the wild beasts.
- Humans are the last thing to be created in Genesis 1, yet they are the ones elevated to rule over all creation, the sea and sky and land creatures. This establishes a major design pattern in the biblical story: God’s elevation of the late-comer to a role of honor above the early-comers.

THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST?

- In the book of Genesis, the theme of the late-comer's elevation often focuses on the jealousy and anger of the "elder." Think of Cain and Abel, or Jacob and Esau ("the older will serve the younger," Genesis 25:23), or of Joseph's older brothers who hate him because of his dreams of ruling over them (Genesis 37:1-11). Or think, later in the Bible, of David's jealous older brothers who were not chosen to be king (1 Samuel 16-17), and so on.

THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST?

- When you come to Genesis 3 after considering this pattern throughout the Hebrew Bible, you're prompted to notice the beasts of day six, who are created first yet summoned to come under the rule of humans who came second. Will any of them be like Cain or Esau or Joseph's brothers and resent being ruled by a creature who has only come to the dry land after them?

THE SNAKE AS A SYMBOL OF DISORDER AND SORCERY

- In the Ancient Near East, snakes were powerful symbols of “chaos creatures,” a creature that doesn’t properly belong to the divinely ordered world. The snake is both a water and land creature, yet it has no legs, making it look out of place on the dry land. But it also doesn’t have fins, making it also out of place in the water. This “out of order” nature of the snake is why it is included among the ritually impure animals in Israel’s Kosher food laws (see Leviticus 11:42).

THE SNAKE AS A SYMBOL OF DISORDER AND SORCERY

- Animals that do not properly “fit” in their category are liminal and belong to the non-ordered realm. Snakes were potent symbols of immortality (rebirth through shedding of skin), death (poisonous bite), and the underworld realm of the dead (the crawl on the ground and descend into holes). To have mastery of snakes was to be master of death. This explains the pervasive snake imagery in Egyptian royal art.

THE SNAKE AS A SYMBOL OF DISORDER AND SORCERY

- The sun-god Re is pulled through the underworld sea at night. The god Seth spears and defeats the death god Apophis (a snake), while the boat is pulled by subjugated night demons (jackals and snakes). From Othmar Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World, p. 55, fig. 55.



EPIC OF GILGAMESH, TABLET 11

- ‘This plant… is the “Plant of Heartbeat”, with it a man can regain his vigour…. ‘Its name shall be “Old Man Grown Young”, I will eat it myself, and be again as I was in my youth!’… Gilgamesh found a pool whose water was cool, down he went into it, to bathe in the water. Of the plant’s fragrance a snake caught scent, came up [in silence], and carried off the plant. As it turned away it shed its skin. Then Gilgamesh sat down and wept, down his cheeks the tears were coursing. — STEPHANIE DALLEY, MYTHS FROM MESOPOTAMIA (OXFORD WORLD CLASSICS), P. 119.



SNAKE = SORCERY

- The word nakhash (נחש) also contains a double meaning, as it is also the word for “sorcery, divination.”

DEUTERONOMY 18:9-11

- When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who **practices divination** (nakhash) or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witch craft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

2 KINGS 21:5-6

- In the two courts of the temple of the Lord, [Manasseh] built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his own son in the fire, **practiced divination** (nakhash), sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger.

2 KINGS 17:16-17

- They forsook all the commands of the Lord their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They **practiced divination** (nakhash) and sought omens and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger.

THE SNAKE AS A FIGURE IN THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM

- The garden of Eden is a high mountain garden temple where Heaven and its creatures overlap with the Earth and its creatures.
- The garden in Eden is the source of a single river that leaves the garden and divides into four rivers that water the main regions of the biblical world (see Genesis 2:8-14). This has a fairly obvious implication: The garden of Eden is portrayed as the highest place on the dry land.

THE SNAKE AS A FIGURE IN THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM

- Eden is described as the host land of the ultimate temple garden. It's a land of gold, fruit trees, precious gems, and abundance (Genesis 2:9-14). These are precisely the images and materials used in the construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 25-31) and the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6-7).

THE SNAKE AS A FIGURE IN THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM

- The Heaven and earth Eden-temple is the same place Israel's prophets saw in their visions (Isaiah 6, 1 Kings 22, Ezekiel 1), a place where God's heavenly presence overlaps with Earth. We're told that there are cherubim in this garden (Genesis 3:22-24), just as they populate God's throne room (see Ezekiel 10:1-15).

THE SNAKE AS A FIGURE IN THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM

- All of this leads the reader to expect Adam and Eve to live together in the garden with spiritual beings of the hybrid animal variety! So when a talking snake appears in Genesis 3, we have a category for this kind of creature.

OBSERVATIONS ON GENESIS 3:1

- This comment invites us to consider that there is more to this snake than just an animal. For starters, it can talk! The phrase “more shrewd than any beast of the field” could mean
- (1) that the snake belongs to the beasts of the field and is more sly than the rest. Or it could also mean
- (2) that it isn’t technically a beast of the field. Rather, it’s a different kind of creature that is simply more shrewd than any kind of beast.

- With either interpretation, the comment means, “This is not your average snake!” The snake also appears to have knowledge of God’s decisions and purposes (“God knows that in the day you eat [the fruit] you will be like divine beings, knowing good and bad,” Genesis 3:5).
- When God curses the snake in Genesis 3:14, he says something that has puzzled readers across the centuries.

GENESIS 3:14

- Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; **on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life**;

OBSERVATIONS ON GENESIS 3:14

- If it was a normal snake, didn't it already crawl in the dust on its belly? Why does God say the snake's future state will be to go in the dust if it already crawls on the ground?
- This statement could be taken to infer that the snake that approached the humans wasn't on the ground. This puzzling image of a snake that doesn't crawl on the ground finds its confirmation much later in the biblical story.

OBSERVATIONS ON GENESIS 3:14

- When the prophet Isaiah has a vision of God's heavenly throne room, he sees heavenly creatures surrounding God's throne. In Ezekiel's visions of the same space, these beings are called "cherubim" and "living creatures," but Isaiah calls them "seraphim" Heb. .(שרפים)

ISAIAH 6:1-3

- In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of his robe filling the temple. **Seraphim** stood above him, **each having six wings**: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory!"

OBSERVATIONS ON GENESIS 3:14

- This is the only place in the entire Bible where the heavenly throne room creatures are called in Hebrew seraphim.
- All modern English translations leave this word untranslated, which is strange, because it is a normal Hebrew word for venomous snake!

NUMBERS 21:6

- Yahweh sent snakes (Heb. nakhash), venomous snakes (Heb. seraphim) among the people, and they bit the people.

DEUTERONOMY 8:15

- Yahweh led you in the great and terrifying wilderness, of the snake, the venomous snake (Heb. seraph).

OBSERVATIONS ON GENESIS 3:14

- Later in the book of Isaiah, the prophet describes the ruler of Babylon as a “snake” (Heb. nakhash) and a “flying snake” (Heb. saraph me’opheph). This appears in the same section as Isaiah’s accusation against the ruler of Babylon, which refers both to the human king of Babylon and a spiritual power that lurks behind Babylon.

ISAIAH 14:29

- Do not rejoice, O Philistia, all of you, because the rod that struck you is broken; for from the **snake** (Heb. nakhash) root a viper will come out, and its fruit will be a **flying snake** (Heb. saraph).

FLYING SNAKES AS RELIGIOUS ICONS

- Flying snakes were a common religious icon in the Ancient Near East, and images of them have even been found in ancient Israelite art (see below: images from Othmar Keel, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, 1977; and Robert Deutsch, “Six Hebrew Fiscal Bullae from the Time of Hezekiah”).







- Also important is that the prophet Ezekiel looks out at Tyre (a powerful seaside kingdom of his day) and accuses its leader of acting like an ancient spiritual rebel. Ezekiel first accuses Tyre's king of claiming to be a deity.
- Ezekiel then likens the king of Tyre to an ancient spiritual rebel who inhabited Eden.

EZEKIEL 28:6-9

- Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Because you have made your heart like the heart of God, therefore, behold, I will bring strangers upon you, the most ruthless of the nations. And they will draw their swords against the **beauty of your wisdom** and defile **your splendor.** They will bring you **down to the pit**, and you will die the death of those who are slain in the heart of the seas. Will you still say, **‘I am an elohim,’** in the presence of your slayer, though **you are a human and not elohim**, in the hands of those who wound you?"

EZEKIEL 28:12-17

- Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: **‘You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God;** every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.

EZEKIEL 28:12-17

- **You were anointed as a covering cherub**, for so I ordained you. You **were on the holy mount of God**; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created **till wickedness was found in you.** Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. **So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub**, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor."

EZEKIEL AS COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 3

- Ezekiel provides us with the earliest interpretation of the Genesis 3 snake within the Bible itself. The snake is understood to be a spiritual being, one of the winged throne guardians, a “living creature” (a.k.a. cherubim) in the garden temple. But as we learned from the “last will be first” design pattern in Genesis, it seems that we’re meant to infer that this snake resented coming under the authority of the human creatures whose origins were of dirt.

EZEKIEL AS COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 3

- And so this glorious creature misused its honored place of God-given authority and rebelled by seducing the humans into misusing their authority in the same way. In this way, the snake represents a spiritual rebellion that coincides with the earthly rebellion of the humans. Genesis 3 portrays the fall of humanity and the fall of the spiritual rebel.

SIBLING RIVALRY

	FIRST BORN	LATE COMER
	CAIN	ABEL
	SARAH	HAGAR
	ISHMAEL	ISAAC
	ESAU	JACOB & MOM
	ALL BROTHERS	JOSEPH
GEN. 1	LAND CREATURES	HUMANS

GOD'S RESPONSE TO HUMAN FAILURE

- God's response to the first humans' failure is to seek them out and pursue relationship with them. What does this say about God's character?
- "This is not just God's response one time. This is God's funda mental response to human failure—pursuit of relationship and invitation to come out of hiding."

Translation and Literary Design

[8]*And they* **heard the sound** *of* **Yahweh God** *walking* **in the garden** *in the wind of the day.*	Yahweh's Entrance
And the human and his woman **hid themselves** *from before the face of Yahweh God among the trees of the garden.*	Human Response
[9]*And* **Yahweh God** *called to the human, and said to him,* *"***Where** *are you?"*	Yahweh's First Question
[10]*And he [the human] said,* *"I* **heard the sound of you in the garden**, *and I was afraid because I was* **naked** *(ערום); and* **I hid myself.**"	Human Response
[11]*And he [***Yahweh God***] said,* *"***Who** *told you that you were* **naked** *(ערום)? Have* **you eaten** *from the tree of which I commanded you not* **to eat**?"	Yahweh's Second Question
[12]*And the human said,* *"The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and* **I ate.**."	Human Response
[13]*And* **Yahweh God** *said to the woman,* *"***What** *is this you have done?"*	Yahweh's Third Question
And the woman said, *"The snake deceived me, and* **I ate.**"	Human Response

THE SOUND OF YAHWEH WALKING WITH THE WIND OF THE DAY

- The vocabulary of Genesis 3:8 was chosen in order to paint the portrait of Yahweh's first personal appearance (= a "theophany"). Later theophany stories will draw upon and develop the imagery of this scene.

THE SOUND OF YAHWEH WALKING WITH THE WIND OF THE DAY

- “The sound/voice of Yahweh” (Heb. qol / (קול): This word describes the sound of Yahweh’s voice when he appears to address his people. It is usually loud, intimidating, and indistinguishable from thunder. The voice of Yahweh is sometimes depicted as a character in its own right.

- “Walking” (Heb. hithalek /(התהלך) This picture of Yahweh “walking about/strolling” in the garden, waiting for the humans to join him, is a powerful image of divine and human intimacy idealized in the garden. The righteous of later generations who live outside of Eden are those who “walk/stroll with Yahweh,” that is, they relate to God in the Eden ideal.

- “The wind of the day” (Heb. ruakh hayom /רוח היום): Yahweh’s personal appearances are often associated with storms and thunder, and so the fact that the “sound” of Yahweh appears with wind is key to the storm imagery later in the Hebrew Bible.
- Some interpreters take the phrase to mean the breezy time of day, that is, in the morning or evening, in contrast to “the heat of the day” (see Gen 18:1).

- Others take it to mean a storm because the words “wind” and “sound” are sometimes associated with thunderstorm theophanies (see Jeremiah 10:13; 51:16). The words “wind” and “day” are also associated with “storm” (see Isa 27:8; Zeph 2:2).

YAHWEH'S SEVEN SPEECHES AND MANY QUESTIONS

- Just as God spoke 10 times over the course of seven days to establish the cosmic order as a sacred space, so here in Genesis 3, God speaks seven times to address the problem of disorder that has been introduced by the snake and the humans.

3:9	And Yahweh Elohim called to the human **and he said** to him, "Where are you?"
3:11	**And he said**, "Who told you that you are naked?"
3:13	**And** Yahweh Elohim **said** to the woman, "What is this you have done?"
3:14	**And** Yahweh Elohim **said** to the snake...
3:16	**And** to the woman, **he said**...
3:17	**And** to the man, **he said**...
3:22	**And** Yahweh Elohim **said**, "Look, the human has become like one of us..."

- Yahweh's three questions display a patient desire that gives the humans an opportunity to own their failure. "Where…? Who…? What…?"
- At each turn, Yahweh invites the humans to acknowledge their violation of the divine command, and the humans evade the questions every step of the way.

- The humans blame shift at each step of the conversation: “the woman!” “the snake!” No one is able to take responsibility for their own choices. Notice how the man blames the one whom God provided as his ezer, and the woman then blames the snake for her own misdirected desire.

GOD'S LAMENT

- Who or what is cursed in Genesis 3:14-19? Who or what is not cursed?
- "It's as if every generation, every book is somehow replaying this primal conflict between the woman and the snake."

[14] **And Yahweh God said to the snake,**
"Because you have done this thing,
you are cursed *more than every beast and more than every living creature of the field*
on your belly you will go,
and **dust you will eat,**
all the days of your life.

		[15] *And I will set hostility*
a		*between you and the woman,*
a′		*and between your seed and her seed;*
	b	*he will strike your head*
	b′	*and you will strike his heel."*

		[16] **And to the woman he said,**
a		*"I will greatly multiply* **your grief** *and your conception,*
a′		**in grief** *you will birth children,*
	b	*and your desire will be for your husband,*
	b′	*and he will rule over you."*

[17] **And to human he said,**
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and you have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying,
'You shall not eat from it'
cursed is the ground *on account of you;*
in grief *you will eat from it*
all the days of your life.

a		[18] *thorns and thistles it shall sprout for you;*
	b	*and you will eat the plants of the field;*
a′		[19] *by the sweat of your face*
	b′	*you will eat bread,*
a		*until you* **return** *to the ground,*
	b	*because from it you were taken;*
	b′	*for* **you are dust,**
a′		*and* **to dust you will return."**

14 **And Yahweh God said to the snake,**
"Because you have done this thing,
you are cursed *more than every beast and more than every living creature of the field*
on your belly you will go,
and **dust you will eat,**
all the days of your life.

	[15]*And I will set hostility*
a	*between you and the woman,*
a′	*and between your seed and her seed;*
b	*he will strike your head*
b′	*and you will strike his heel."*
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"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and you have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying,
'You shall not eat from it'
cursed is the ground *on account of you;*
in grief *you will eat from it*
all the days of your life.

a [18]*thorns and thistles it shall sprout for you;*
b *and you will eat the plants of the field;*
a' [19]*by the sweat of your face*
b' *you will eat bread,*

a *until you* **return** *to the ground,*
b *because from it you were taken;*
b' *for* **you are dust,**
a' *and* **to dust you will return.**"

A PROGRAMMATIC POEM: GENESIS 3:14-19

- The poetic speech of God makes clear a pattern that has already been at work in Genesis 1-3, and will in fact continue for the rest of the book of Genesis and on through the large narrative work of the Torah and Former Prophets (Genesis-2 Kings).

- Strategic narratives in the Torah often begin or conclude with poems that condense the core themes and images of the surrounding stories while carrying forward the plot. These poems occur on the micro-level within individual stories, but they also occur at the macro-level that determines the larger plot and themes of the entire story of the Torah and Prophets.
- Each of these poems has a riddle-like character in summarizing the themes of the narrative up to that point and also in directing the reader's attention to the main themes in the following story.

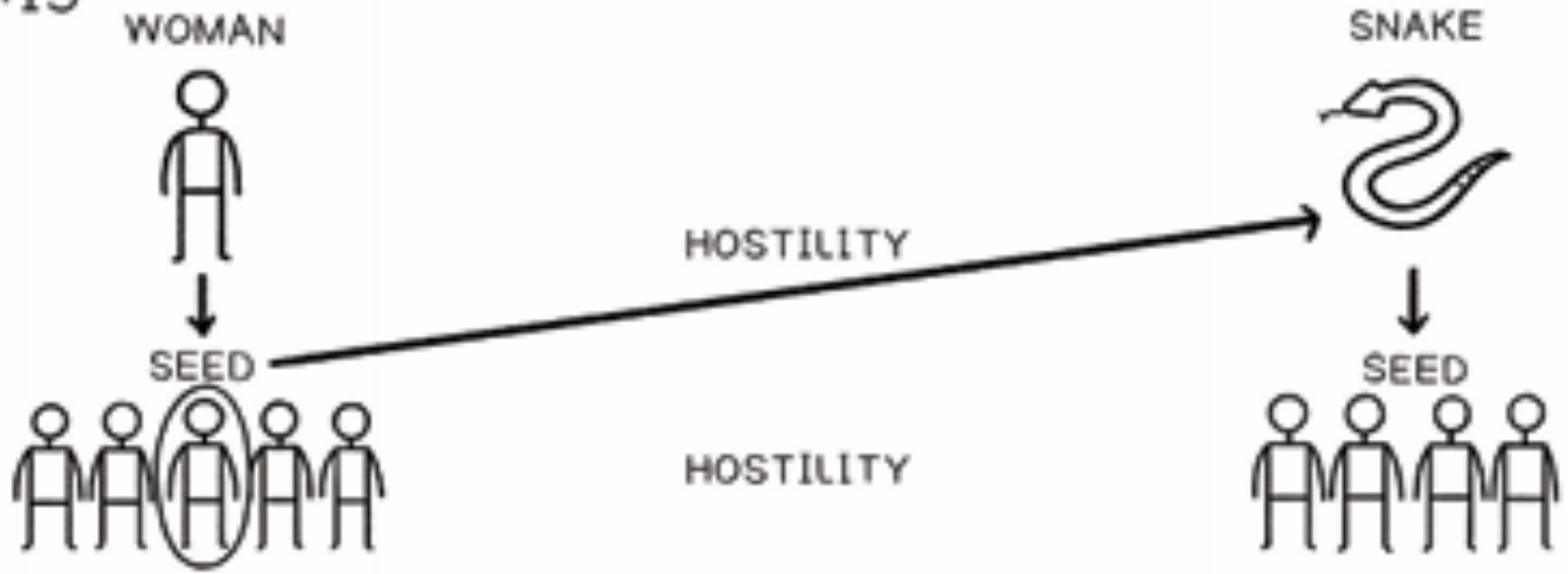
	Narrative	Embedded Poem	
GENESIS	1:1-2:3	1:27	Image of God poem
	2:4-24	2:23	Song of Adam about Eve
	3:1-13	3:14-19	Curses Add Consequences
	4:1-26	4:23-24	Lemek's Murderous Boast
	5:1-9:28	9:25-27	Noah's Farewell Speech
	10:1-11:32	12:1-3	God's Promise to Abram
	24:1-67	24:60	Farewell Blessing for Rebekah
	25:19-34	25:23	Rebekah's Birth Oracle
	27:1-28:7	27:27-29	Isaac's Blessing for Jacob
	37:1-50:26	49:1-28	Jacob's Farewell Speech

	Narrative	Embedded Poem	
EXODUS	1:1-15:21	15:1-22	Song of the Sea
NUMBERS	22:1-24:25	23:7-10 23:18-24 24:2-9 24:15-24	Balaam's Oracles of Blessing
DEUTERONOMY	Deuteronomy 1-34	32:1-43	Moses' Final Warning Speech
		33:1-29	Moses' Farewell Blessing for Israel

YAHWEH'S CURSE ON THE SNAKE: GENESIS 3:14-15

- "On your belly you will go, you will eat dust": This is imagery of humiliation and defeat (see Micah 7:17) that is drawn upon by later biblical authors when they depicted the messianic age (see Isaiah 65:25).

GENESIS 3:15



CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAIL

- In Genesis 3:16-17, God says to the woman that she will experience “pain” related to bearing children. What kind of pain does it seem like God is talking about?

CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAIL

- “You could call these punishments, but in a way, it’s Yahweh naming the new normal in light of the decisions they’ve made. In this new normal, Yahweh will use this new environment to test the faith of his people so they come to see he is the one who gives them life, not their schemes to produce children or to produce the fruit of the ground.”

THE JUXTAPOSITION OF GENESIS 3:15 AND 3:16

- Genesis 3:15 told us that there will be struggle between personal forces of rebellion that carry on the legacy of the snake and the "seed of the woman."
- This struggle will eventuate in a conflict that wounds both the snake and the seed.
- However this comes about, it's clear that childbirth is at the heart of this conflict and also the strange vehicle of God's rescue.

THE JUXTAPOSITION OF GENESIS 3:15 AND 3:16

- Genesis 3:16 follows by focusing on this very reality: childbirth, which is the unique and privileged role of the woman, is similarly described as a fraught reality.
- It will take place in the midst of much struggle and grief, yet at the same time, the birth of the promised seed is the hope of future restoration.

- The pain surrounding the entry of every child into the world is a paradoxical reminder of the future hope of creation's rescue.
- It makes perfect sense, then, why the pain of childbirth becomes a powerful biblical image of suffering leading to redemption (see Romans 8:22-24 or Matthew 24:8).

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE WOMAN: GENESIS 3:16

- I will greatly multiply your grief and your conception, in grief you will birth children.
- 1. The word “grief, pain” (Heb. ‘itsabon) IS NOT the Hebrew word for labor pains:
- The same word ‘itsabon is used in the next verse (Gen 3:17) to refer to the frustrating toil the man will experience in the field (see also Gen 5:29; Isa 14:3).

- 2. The word “grief, pain” is applied to the noun “conception” (Heb. heryon) which is explicitly NOT labor pain.
- The root “grief, hurtful” (‘atsab / (עצב is widely used in biblical Hebrew: Verb: (‘atsab /עצב) the emotional experience of grief, sadness.
- ‘atsab can be used of a combined physical/emotional pain that results from difficult work circumstances.

PROVERBS 15:1

- A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a word of ‘**otseb** stirs up anger.

PSALM 147:2-3 (NIV)

- The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their ‘**otseb**.

PROVERBS 10:22 (NIV)

- The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without ‘**etseb** for it.

PROVERBS 14:23 (NIV)

- All ‘**etseb** brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

‘ETSEB – EMOTIONAL OR WORK PAIN NOT BIRTHPAIN

- “[The word ‘etseb] is used of emotional pain and the pain involved in work. It can also be used of a more generalized kind of pain. Is is never used else where in the Old Testament, however, to refer to labor pains, or ‘birthpangs.’ Conversely, there is a well-established vocabulary which is routinely used to labor pain: tsarar (צרר), khebel (חבל), and khul (חול)…

‘ETSEB – EMOTIONAL OR WORK PAIN NOT BIRTHPAIN

- If we take our lead from the meaning of ‘etseb (עצב) elsewhere in the Old Testament, Gen 3:16 refers to the agony, hardship, worry, and anxiety of the circumstances in which children are conceived, born and raised, and in which they die… This is the same word’s clear meaning when describing the man’s work in the field in the very next verse (Gen 3:17).” — IAIN PROVAN, “PAIN IN CHILDBIRTH?”, P. 290.

‘ETSEB – EMOTIONAL OR WORK PAIN NOT BIRTHPAIN

- This interpretation of Genesis 3:16a makes even more sense in the light of Genesis 3:16b.
- Your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you.
- The key interpretive question is whether this is a comparison or a contrast, and whether the key words “desire” and “rule” are to be taken as positive or negative. This results in four different interpretations of this sentence.

INTERPRETATION #1: CONTRAST

- Your **desire [negative]** will be for your husband, but he will **rule [positive]** over you.
- The woman's "desire" is a negative one to control and manipulate her husband, in line with her deceptive behavior in giving him the fruit that she took.

INTERPRETATION #1: CONTRAST

- In contrast, and as a punishment of sorts, God appoints that man rules woman as her authority. The ESV translation provides an interpretive translation that points in this direction: “Your desire will be contrary to your husband, but he will rule over you.”

INTERPRETATION #1: CONTRAST PROBLEMS

- Genesis 3:6-7 does not portray the woman as acting against the will of her husband. On the contrary, he is right next to her! And God holds both of them accountable for the act, not just the woman. She is not portrayed as more culpable than the man, so that these words are a punishment.
- The man “ruling” the woman is a direct inversion of God’s ideal will humanity in Genesis 1:26-28: that male and female rule together.

INTERPRETATION #2: CONTRAST

- Your **desire [positive]** will be for your husband, but he will **rule [negative]** over you.
- The woman's desire is viewed as a natural or instinctual kind of submissive desire, while, unfortunately, the man's desire is for aggressive control of the woman.
- This interpretation sees Genesis 3:16b as a kind of reflection on the "nature" of gender relations.

INTERPRETATION #2: CONTRAST PROBLEMS

- This is a very narrow and biased view of gender relations that is way too sweeping in its assumptions. As if all men have power complexes in relation to women and all women have positive feelings about men?!
- It is hard to see how this interpretation contributes to the context of Genesis 3:16a or the broader context of the story, where the man and woman are clearly at odds with each other in Genesis 3:8-13.

INTERPRETATION #3: COMPARISON

- Your **desire [positive]** will be for your husband, but he will **rule [positive]** over you.
- The woman's positive desire will be a submissive one for her husband's love, and in return, he rules her with divinely granted authority.
- This view describes the ideal relation between genders from a Christian Hierarchical point of view.

INTERPRETATION #3: COMPARISON PROBLEMS

- Nobody actually thinks that Genesis 3:16b is making a positive, ideal statement. This interpretation is a logical possibility, but not likely given the context that God is giving bad news in Genesis 3:14-19.

INTERPRETATION #4: COMPARISON

- Your **desire [negative]** will be for your husband, but he will **rule [negative]** over you.
- The woman's desires will be in contrast to her husband's desires, generating conflict between them, and in response, the man will make a power play over the woman to control and subdue her.

INTERPRETATION #4: COMPARISON

- This is God's sad and realistic warning of the new normal for the man and woman outside of Eden.
- Now that each person "does what is good in their own eyes," the ideal of Genesis 1:26-28, that male and female rule together, is tragically distorted. Women desire to subvert their husbands, and men return the favor.

INTERPRETATION #4: COMPARISON STRENGTHS THAT THE OTHERS LACK

- 1. It fits into the larger context perfectly, as it represents a sad inversion of both ideals in Genesis 1:26-28 (ruling together) and Genesis 2:18-25 (naked intimacy and desirable union).

INTERPRETATION #4: COMPARISON STRENGTHS THAT THE OTHERS LACK

- The rare word “desire” (teshuqah /תשוקה) is used only two times elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, both hyperlinked (pointing back to) Genesis 3:16b.
- Genesis 4:7 is a clever hyperlink: “[sin’s] **desire** is for you, and you can rule it.” Here the desire of “sin” for Cain is a negative desire to control his actions and consume him like an animal.

INTERPRETATION #4: COMPARISON STRENGTHS THAT THE OTHERS LACK

- Song of Songs 7:10: “I belong to my beloved, and his **desire** is for me.” This is also a clever hyperlink back to Genesis 3:16, where the idealized male and female lovers (in the garden of the Song!) reverse the tragic reality of Eden back into its ideal. Song 7:10 represents the undoing of the fracture between man and woman in Genesis 3:16! Here the “desire” is positive, precisely in contrast to Genesis 3:16.

INTERPRETATION #4: COMPARISON STRENGTHS THAT THE OTHERS LACK

- 3. The man “ruling” the woman is the precise opposite picture of God’s ideal in Genesis 1-2, where male and female rule together (Gen 1:26-28), and where the woman is set apart from the animals not as the man’s inferior but as his equal (from his “side”).

INTERPRETATION #4: COMPARISON STRENGTHS THAT THE OTHERS LACK

- 4. The rest of the book of Genesis is a series of narrative embodiments of this interpretation of Genesis 3:16. Every generation will experience moments where a woman desires power and control over her husband, which is met by a response of manipulation and power play in return: Abraham and Sarai (Gen 12:10-20 and ch. 16), Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 27), Jacob and Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29-30), Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38), etc.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MAN: GENESIS 3:17-19

- “Because you listened (shama’ /קול) to the voice (qol / קול) of your wife”
- This phrase refers back to his “taking and eating” in Genesis 3:6, which also provides a contrast to his fearful response when God entered the garden in Genesis 3:10: “I listened (shama’ /קול) to your sound/voice (qol / קול) in the garden.”

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MAN: GENESIS 3:17-19

- Instead of “listening to the voice of God” about the tree, his eating from it was “listening to the voice” of his wife. This introduction of the key phrase prepares the reader for many later narratives where “listening to the voice” becomes a synonym for someone’s moral failure on analogy with Genesis 3 (see Gen 16:2; 27:8), or their moral victory that reverses Genesis 3 (see Gen 22:18).

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MAN: GENESIS 3:17-19

- “Cursed is the land on account of you…”
- Instead of experiencing God’s uninhibited blessing of abundance in the land, outside of Eden, humanity will have to struggle with a land that easily produces inedible plants (“thorns and thistles”) and grows edible food only with “grievous toil.”

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MAN: GENESIS 3:17-19

- “You will the vegetation of the field (‘eseb hassadeh / עשב השדה)”
- Outside of Eden, humanity is reduced to the food that was explicitly assigned to the animals in Genesis 1:30: “to every living creature of the land, every bird…and creeper on the land…the green vegetation (‘eseb / עשב) will be for food.”

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MAN: GENESIS 3:17-19

- Instead of eating from the easily cultivated fruit trees of Eden that produce food by themselves, humanity will be forced to coax the ground to produce vegetation (3:18) that can be made into “bread” (3:19).

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MAN: GENESIS 3:17-19

- “By the sweat of your brow…until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken” (3:19)
- Subsistence agriculture is body-breaking work that reduces humans to servants of the ground and grinds them back into the dust. This is in contrast to the easily enjoyed food of the cultivated garden.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MAN: GENESIS 3:17-19

- These words also link forward to 3:22, that state that humanity would have only achieved immortality if they had access to God's presence through the tree of life. The profound implication is this: The Eden narrative presents the dirt humans as mortal by nature, not immortal.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MAN: GENESIS 3:17-19

- Immortality was not inherent to human nature but a gift that was forfeited and never attained. Instead of “falling from perfection into death,” Genesis 2-3 is a story about a “failure to receive God’s gift of eternal life.”
- Perhaps we should begin calling Genesis 3 “The Fail” instead of “The Fall.”

HEBREW QOL 

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EDEN STORY

- God doesn't stop working in and with humanity after he banishes them from the garden.
- What does this show us about God's heart?
- What should we expect from God as we continue reading Genesis and the rest of the Bible?

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EDEN STORY

- “This is a narrative about paradise 'ungained,' paradise that has yet to be gained. Which really transforms what you are hoping for as you turn the page to chapter 4.”

EVE'S NAME AND A DIVINE MERCY: GENESIS 3:20-21

20 *And the human called the name of his woman "**Hawwah**" (חוה),*
*"for she is the mother of all **living**" (חי).*

21 *And God made for human and his wife, garments of skin,*
and he clothed them.

EVE'S NAME AND A DIVINE MERCY: GENESIS 3:20-21

- These two verses seem randomly placed here, but in fact, they are strategically located in order to create a frame around the entire fall narrative of Genesis 3:1-19 by matching and inverting multiple elements in Genesis 2:18-25.

Genesis 2:18-25

1. Adam named the woman *"woman"*

2. God provides woman as an *'ezer* (עזר)

3. They are naked and not ashamed

4. Humanity at peace with the animals

3:1-19

The snake,

the woman,
and the man

Genesis 3:20-21

1. Adam names the woman *"Hawwah"*

2. The deception of the *'ezer* (עזר) creates the need for "skin" (עור)

3. Human nakedness is covered by God

4. An animal is killed to "clothe" humans

EVE'S NAME AND A DIVINE MERCY: GENESIS 3:20-21

- After the failure of the man and woman, the story concludes with these two short details. The naming of the woman in 2:23 is now furthered by a dual wordplay.
- She is named "Eve" (Heb. hawwah / חוה) for she is the mother of all "life" (Heb. hay /חי) The semitic root hawwah also means "snake" in Jewish Aramaic (חויה) and Syriac [see Kohler-Baumgartner, Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 296].

EVE'S NAME AND A DIVINE MERCY: GENESIS 3:20-21

- In replacement of the leaf garments the humans made to hide their nakedness from each other, God provides "garments of skin **(עור)**".
- This last word is a wordplay on God's provision of the woman as a deliverance of help for the man **(עזר).**

EVE'S NAME AND A DIVINE MERCY: GENESIS 3:20-21

- The provision of garments for the humans happens before their expulsion from Eden and is portrayed as an act of divine generosity in the midst of judgment. Now that the humans have made the irreversible decision, God accommodates their non-ideal situation and provides them with a gift. And this "garment" (Heb. ketonet / (כתנת) is not just a tunic but a robe (Joseph's technicolor dream coat is a ketonet as well: Gen 37:3).

DECEPTION AND GARMENTS

- This scene also plants the seed of a key motif in the book of Genesis: deception and garments. In the Eden story, the snake's deception of the naked woman results in her need for a garment. In later stories:
- Rebekah and Jacob trick Isaac with deceptive garments and food (Gen 27:15-17).
- Joseph's brothers deceive Jacob with a bloodied garment (Gen 37:31-33).

DECEPTION AND GARMENTS

- Tamar deceives Judah by “covering” herself with deceptive garments (Gen 38:14).
- Joseph is elevated from prison and gets new garments (Gen 41:42) that disguise him from his brothers so that he can deceptively get them to tell the truth (Gen 42:8, chs. 43-44).

DECEPTION AND GARMENTS

- This provision of garments for the one whom God, exiles from Eden is also reversed in Israel's priest hood. They are also assigned "divine garments (ketonet)" by God which will cover their nakedness when they work at the altar or enter the tabernacle (Exod 21:26; 28:39-43).

EXILE FROM EDEN: GENESIS 3:22-24

[22] *And Yahweh God said,*
"Look, the human has become like one of us, knowing good and bad,
and now so that he won't send out his hand and take also from the tree of life (חיים),
and eat and live (חי) forever..."

[23] *And Yahweh God* ***sent him out*** *from the garden*
to work the ground from which he was taken,
[24] *and he* ***banished*** *the human.*

And he made to dwell at the east of the garden of Eden
cherubim and the flame of the whirling sword to guard way to the tree of life (חי).

THE CONCLUSION IS THE INVERSION OF THE EDEN STORY'S INTRODUCTION:

- God created the human and placed him in the garden > the human is banished from the garden
- God causes the tree of life and knowing good and bad to grow > humans are cut off from them

THE CONCLUSION IS THE INVERSION OF THE EDEN STORY'S INTRODUCTION:

- Before the garden, there was no human to work the ground > outside Eden, the human works the ground
- Humanity was made mortal, so that by obeying God, they could remain in the garden and receive the gift of eternal life > now they are cut off and sent into the land of mortality

THE CONCLUSION IS THE INVERSION OF THE EDEN STORY'S INTRODUCTION:

- Humanity was directed to "guard/keep" the garden > humanity is now guarded/kept from the garden

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EDEN STORY IN GENESIS 2:4-3:24

- God's ideal for creation is that his transcendent and eternal life-giving presence (Heaven) be united with our material creation (Earth) so that it is transformed into eternal life.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EDEN STORY IN GENESIS 2:4-3:24

- Eden is the key biblical image of the place where Heaven and Earth are one. It is both Heaven and Earth simultaneously, so is the tabernacle and the temple in Jerusalem. This is why the imagery of Heaven is pervaded by garden and temple imagery throughout the Bible.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EDEN STORY IN GENESIS 2:4-3:24

- Outside of Eden, the reality of Heaven on Earth is hidden from us most of the time, though we experience its gifts of blessing in every birth of a baby, in every abundant harvest, in every good meal, in every experience of beauty and laughter, in every feeling of intimacy and communion with family and someone we love. These gifts of Eden are small tastes of ultimate goodness that pervade our world and point humanity to their Creator if they have eyes to see.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EDEN STORY IN GENESIS 2:4-3:24

- The story of Genesis 3 is more about “the fail” than “the fall.” It is about a misguided attempt to seize divine wisdom.
- Evil is a semi-personal presence that causes doubt about the Creator’s goodness and intentions and compels humans to declare themselves to be the author of their own identity and of good and evil. This results in a tragic irony, as humans give their divine dignity over to creation with its animal-like appetite for survival and control.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EDEN STORY IN GENESIS 2:4-3:24

- The story sets the main plot conflict that drives the rest of the biblical story: God had purposes to rule creation through his human images, but now they are in rebellion and the cause of chaos and disorder in God's good world.
- The solution: We need a new kind of human, who can (1) deal with the problem humanity has generated, and (2) restore humanity back to its ideal role. We need a new kind of human!