

בְּרֵאשִׁית

BERESHITH/IN THE BEGINNING Bereshith/Genesis 1:1-6:8

Well as the **wheel** continues to **cycle**, here we are again at the beginning of the first chapter in the first book of the Bible, **Bereshith**. We begin with the **familiar stories** of the **Bible** – the **creation account**, the **fall of Adam and Eve**, the **murder of Abel by his brother Cain**, and a **genealogy** that takes us clear to **Noah**. Hebrew teacher, **Brad Scott** makes the claim that **every Scriptural doctrine** can be found within the **Hebrew words** of the **first four chapters of Bereshith**. Obviously this means these chapters are worthy of much study. For now we will attempt to graze the surface in just a few areas of the first Torah parasha of the cycle. I hope you will **attach yourself to the wheel** as it turns and makes **another complete rotation** through this coming year.

Bereshith begins with **seven Hebrew words** that translate – **In the beginning, Elohim created the heavens and the earth:**

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ Bereshith 1:1

Since **Hebrew** reads from **right to left**, the **first word** of the **Torah** is **Bereshith** (בְּרֵאשִׁית). This word is **interpreted** as “**in the beginning**”. Its **three letter root word** is **roshe** (רֹאשׁ) which has more to do with the “**head**” or the “**beginning**” of something, rather than an association with “**time**”. **Elohim** is completely outside of **time**. Therefore the **first word of the Torah** is an **expression of who Elohim is**. We can also make the **connection with Yeshua**, who is the **living Word** who **begins** all things:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. ² He was in the beginning with Elohim. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

After **seven perfect words** that begin **Bereshith**, we now follow up with **seven words of disaster:**

וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תְהוֹם וְכָהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם Bereshith 1:2

Bereshith 1:2 The earth was emptiness (תְהוֹם), and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.

Something has **happened** to the **earth**. This seems to be the **result of Lucifer being cast down to earth in judgment:**

*Ezekiel 28:13 You were in Eden, the garden of Elohim; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. ¹⁴ "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; **You were on the holy mountain of Elohim; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.** ¹⁵ **You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.** ¹⁶ "By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, And you sinned; **Therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of Elohim;***

And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones.¹⁷ "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground..."

Isaiah 45:18 tells us that יהוה did not create the earth “empty” (תֵּהוֹ):

Isaiah 45:18 For thus says יהוה, Who created the heavens, Who is Elohim, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it empty (תֵּהוֹ), Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am יהוה, and there is no other.

Isaiah also alludes to **hasatan** as the one who caused the emptiness of the earth:

Isaiah 14:17 Who made the world as a wilderness

Thus as we continue on in **Bereshith**, we will begin to read of the **Creator bringing order** back into the world. The **Spirit of Elohim** will first begin to **move across the face of the waters** as the **renewal begins**:

וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם: Bereshith 1:2

Bereshith 1:2 ... And the Spirit of Elohim was hovering over the face of the waters.

Psalms 104:30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.

Brad Scott defines the **Spirit** as the “**demonstrative, active presence of Elohim**”. The **first thing Elohim does** is to **cleanses the waters** so that they in turn can **cleanses the rest of the creation**. From here on after, **water** becomes an important element for **cleansing in judgment, purification, and salvation**. So what the **Torah** has given us **starting in 1:1** is:

- Seven Hebrew words of perfection
- Seven Hebrew words of chaos
- Five Hebrew words of redemption

We come to the **very first words spoken by the Almighty**:

Bereshith 1:3 Then Elohim said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Both **Psalm 36** and **John 1** make the **connection** between “**life**” and “**light**”:

Psalms 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

We have gone from **darkness to light**. When the **entire world was in darkness...just one authoritative statement by the Almighty and the whole world lit up!** We know this to be a **powerful, spiritual light** since the **sun, moon, and the stars** were not put in place until the **4th day of creation**. In **Judaism**, the idea of **spiritual light** is taught to young children as they begin to

study Torah. When the world seems to be encompassed by a spiritual darkness which endangers its very existence, there is always hope. In just one statement, our Creator can send forth His Word and there can be a great light:

2 Corinthians 4:6 For it is the Elohim who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of Elohim in the face of Yeshua the Messiah.

The idea of light shining independently of the sun, appears to us again at the end of Revelation. In context, this is after the 1,000 year reign of Messiah:

Revelation 22:5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for Adonai Elohim gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

This is also prophesied in Isaiah. I've added some Hebrew words in parentheses to give you more insights:

Isaiah 60:18 Violence (חַמָּץ - Hamas) shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation (יְשׁוּעָה - Yeshua), And your gates Praise.¹⁹ " The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But יהוה יהיה לך לאור will be to you an everlasting light, And your Elohim your glory.²⁰ Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For יהוה יהיה לך לאור will be your everlasting light, And the days of your mourning shall be ended.

Just a little side note here....in Hebrew, “the light” is et ha’or (אֵת הָאֹר). The numerical value is 613, which equals the number of the commandments in the Torah!

Let’s jump ahead to the fourth day of creation:

Bereshith 1:14 Then Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs (אוֹת) and seasons (מוֹעֲדִים), and for days and years;¹⁵ "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.¹⁶ Then Elohim made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.¹⁷ Elohim set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,¹⁸ and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And Elohim saw that it was good.¹⁹ So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

The etymology of the word “sign” (אוֹת) means “to communicate something”. The Sabbath is called a “sign” (אוֹת):

Shemot/Exodus 31:13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign (אוֹת) between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am יהוה who sanctifies you.

Quite simply, the **Creator** has given us a way of **marking time HIS way**. **Man** has come up with **other calendars**, but with the **knowledge** that He has **given us in His Word**, we can figure out the **seasons (moedim - מועדים)**. **Seasons (מועדים)** are “**set feast times**” or “**appointments**” with our **Creator**:

Vayikra/Leviticus 23:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts (מועדים) of יהוה, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts (מועדים).'

Therefore, the **sun and the moon** become **reminders** and the **source of the signals** that will **determine the dates** that יהוה has **chosen to meet with us**. The root (ya'ad - יעד) of the word for “**seasons**” (moedim - מועדים) associates this time with **betrothal**! As the **bride of Messiah**, let's **not miss any of these “dates”!!**

Let's move ahead to the **creation of man**:

Bereshith 1:27 So Elohim created man in His own image; in the image of Elohim He created him; male and female He created them.

The characterization of **man** being **made in the “image of Elohim”** gives him the **privilege of being the symbol of Yah's presence on earth**. **Man** himself is **not divine**, but **his existence bears witness to the activity of the Creator in the life of the world**. **Yeshua**, however, is **THE LIGHT of the world**. He is **not only the symbol of Yah's presence, He IS the presence**:

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life -- ² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us --

The **creation week** is brought to **completion with the 7th day**. This day is **unique** from the **other six days**. **No creative work** occurred on this day. It is the only day **blessed and set apart** (made **holy** – kadesh קדש). It is significant that the **first use of holiness** relates to **time**. This **blessing** belongs to **no other day**:

Bereshith 2:2 And on the seventh day Elohim ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified (kadesh - קדש) it, because in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made.

The **institution of the Shabbat** is **not specifically found in these verses**. Later what we find is that the **Sabbath** will become a **distinctively Israelite ordinance**, a **sign of the eternal covenant between יהוה and Israel**. So.....it becomes very important for you to determine “**who**” **Israel is**, since the **Sabbath has been given to Israel**:

Shemot 31:13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am יהוה who sanctifies you.' ¹⁴ 'You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to

you....¹⁶ "Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.

The **Sabbath** is also a part of the **Ten Commandments**, given specifically to a people brought out of Egypt:

Shemot/Exodus 20:1 And Elohim spoke all these words, saying:² " I am יהוה your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage....⁸ " Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,¹⁰ but the seventh day is the Sabbath of יהוה your Elohim. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.¹¹ For in six days יהוה made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore יהוה blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

We have already discussed the **appointed feasts** (moedim - מוֹעֲדִים), dictated by the **phases of the moon**, when יהוה has chosen to meet with us. Also, the **Hebrew days, months, and years** are all determined by the phases of the moon and the movement of the sun. But the **7th day Sabbath** stands alone. It is **entirely independent of the movement of celestial bodies**, as we simply continually count to seven. It is **unparalleled**, as a day that is a sign between the Almighty Creator and His chosen. It is the Sabbath that is credited with being that which **preserved the Jews as a people** while in exile, whereas the **other tribes all lost their Israelite identity** when they assimilated into the nations.

Let's change directions and find the **first verse** in the Bible where the term "יהוה Elohim" occurs:

Bereshith 2:4 This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that יהוה Elohim made the earth and the heavens,

Although the Almighty has many names and descriptions, two are primary – Elohim and יהוה. Elohim (אלהים) is a noun which refers to the Creator who is also the judge over His creation. It appears over **2,600 times** in the Hebrew Scriptures and is normally translated as "God". The sages see "Elohim" as describing **divine justice** and "יהוה" as **divine compassion**. In the 11th century, **Judah Halevi** taught that the word "El" (אל) was a **title generally used by pagans to signify a god** (El is singular), i.e., a **force of nature** (the sun, the storm, the earth, the sea, etc). The "Elohim" (plural) of the Hebrew Scriptures is the **totality of all powers**. He is **King and Judge over all**.

"יהוה", by contrast, is **not just a noun but a name**. Where "Elohim" refers to the Almighty as the **totality of all powers**, "יהוה" is "the One who speaks to us" and "the One with whom we have relationship". יהוה appears nearly **7,000 times** throughout the Bible, usually translated as "LORD". Whereas we see "Elohim" in the **marvels of creation**, we encounter "יהוה" when we are given **insights and revelations**.

Names have other meanings, which are often **determined by the letters** which make up the word:

ה ו ה י

- **Yud (י)** – **hand** – symbolizes **power and strength**:
- **Hey (ה)**– **to reveal, grace**. There are **two hey’s** in the Almighty’s Name. **Grace** is revealed the **first time in the form of salvation** (e.g. Noah received grace), and the **second time in the form of restoration**. We can also parallel this with the **first and second comings of Yeshua**.
- **Vav (ו)**– **nail**

So how does the **name of Yeshua** fit into all this? How do we reconcile these verses?

Philippians 2:9 Therefore Yah also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,¹⁰ that at the **name of Yeshua every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that **Yeshua the Messiah is Adonai**, to the glory of Yah the Father.

In these **Philippians** verses, Paul is quoting from **Isaiah**. Notice that in **Isaiah** it is **יהוה** who alone is to be bowed down to in worship and confession. But Paul applies this statement directly to **Yeshua**. Therefore the **implication is clear. Yeshua is the Messiah, and He is יהוה!**

Isaiah 45:21 Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, **יהוה**? And there is no other **Elohim besides Me, A just El and a Messiah**; There is none besides Me.²² "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am Elohim, and there is no other."²³ I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, **That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.**

Now, in **Bereshith 2:7**, we read of how **man** was **formed** and **where** it was that **יהוה** Elohim placed him:

Bereshith 2:6 but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.
⁷And **יהוה** Elohim formed man of the dust (**עפר**) of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.⁸ **יהוה** Elohim planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

Focusing now on the “**garden**”, we find “**two trees**” planted “**eastward in Eden**”:

Bereshith 2:8 **יהוה** Elohim planted a **garden eastward in Eden**, and there He put the man whom He had formed.⁹ And out of the ground **יהוה** Elohim made every **tree** grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The **tree of life** was also in the midst of the garden, and the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**.

Notice that the **garden** seems to be a **smaller part of a location** known as **Eden**. **Man** is formed **outside of the garden** and **placed into it** by יהוה Elohim. The word for “eastward” is **miqadem** (מִקְדָּם) whose **root** means “ancient”. “Ancient” can be defined as the “**establishment of truths from the very beginning**”. Thus we see that the **garden was planted with His truth**. Let’s look at a couple of verses where we find this concept of “ancient” or “east”. The first verse is a **midrash** on **Bereshith** and the **garden**:

Isaiah 46:10 Declaring from the beginning (בְּרֵאשִׁית) the latter end (אַחֲרֵית), and from ancient times (מִקְדָּם) things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel (עֲצָה) shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

- **From the beginning** - בְּרֵאשִׁית - compare with **first word of the Torah**
- **Latter end** - אַחֲרֵית - **idiom** for the **end of days**, thus we can **learn** from the “beginning” what will happen **in the end**
- **Ancient times** - מִקְדָּם
 - **Etymological root word** (קָדַם) means “**initial source**”
 - All of **Yah’s ways** come from the east (קָדַם)
 - All of **man’s ways** come from the west
- **Counsel** - עֲצָה
 - **Psalm 33:11** The **counsel** (עֲצָה) of יהוה **stands forever**, the plans of His heart to all generations.
 - (עֵץ), the word for “**tree**” comes **from the verbal root for “counsel”** (עֲצָה). It literally means “**that which supports**”. In the **garden** were **two trees** (עֵץ) – one with the **counsel** (עֲצָה) of **life**, and **one with the counsel** (עֲצָה) of **death**.

*Micah 5:2 " But you, **Bethlehem Ephrathah**, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me **The One to be Ruler in Israel**, Whose goings forth are from ancient times (מִקְדָּם), From everlasting."*

And **when Messiah** comes, His appearance will be as lightning **from the east** (מִקְדָּם) to the west:

Matthew 24:27 "For as the lightning comes from the east (מִקְדָּם) and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."

Let’s skip ahead now to the encounter with the **serpent** in **chapter 3**:

*Bereshith 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which יהוה Elohim had made. And he said to the woman, "**Has Elohim indeed said**, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"*

The **story** is very **familiar**. It is the supposedly **minor details** that we are going to be looking at. Let’s **compare** this verse with **what Elohim actually said**:

***Bereshith 2:16** And יהוה Elohim commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

Did you notice that in **2:16** it says that יהוה Elohim actually **“commanded”** the man, but in **3:1** the serpent **lessens the Creator’s words** by asking if Elohim had **“said”**? Not only did he **change the verb**, but the **serpent left out the name יהוה**, the part of His name which symbolizes **relationship**. It is also interesting that the **serpent approached the woman** since it was **Adam** who had **received the command from יהוה Elohim**. By the way, **do WE** ever **lessen commandments** by saying that they were only something that יהוה **“said”**?

The woman replies to the serpent:

***Bereshith 3:2** And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, Elohim has said, 'You shall not eat it, **nor shall you touch it**, lest you die.' "*

In her correction to the serpent, **Eve either exaggerates the divine commandment by adding to it** (nor shall you touch it) **or she simply quotes misinformation as received from her husband**. The serpent replies:

***Bereshith 3:4** Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely **die**. ⁵ "For Elohim knows that in the day you **eat** of it your eyes will be **opened**, and you will be like Elohim, **knowing** good and evil."*

In speaking to the woman, the serpent consistently uses **verbs in their plural forms**. This is **evidence that Adam was within earshot of the conversation**. In fact, this is indicated in the words of the next verse (**with her**):

***Bereshith 3:6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*

It is hard for us to imagine how this could have happened. The couple was living in an environment of **beauty, tranquility and harmony**. They **walked with the Creator**. It should have been a fairytale existence. Still, **Adam was not satisfied**. He wanted to be **in control of his own life**. He **did not want** to be **dependent on someone**, even if it was his **Creator**.

We wonder **where this independence in Adam** came from. Yet, when we come to **salvation through Yeshua** do we **willingly turn our lives over to Him and allow Him to be in complete control of our lives**? Do we **“add to”** or **“take away from”** the **commandments** He has given to us? Do we **wholeheartedly embrace Torah**?

We don’t have time to look at all of the ramifications of the sin of Adam and Eve, but let’s take a look at **Adam’s punishment**:

***Bereshith 3:17** Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed*

*is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the **herb of the field**.¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."*

In verse 18, "**herb**" can also be translated as "**grasses**". Now **instead** of being able to eat from the **Tree of Life**, they must eat from these **grasses of the field**. The staples of the **Israelite diet** in the land are **barley and wheat**. It is notable that the **first two festivals, Pesach (Passover) and Shavuot (Pentecost)** focus on these **two grasses**. On **Pesach, Messiah is associated with the first fruits of the barley harvest**; on **Shavuot, believers are associated with the first fruits of the wheat harvest**. But on **Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)**, the **focus is on fruit!** The **festival of Sukkot** is just a bit of a **reminder** and a **foretaste of being back in the garden** where the **Tree of Life** will once again **bear fruit**:

*Revelation 22:2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was **the tree of life**, which bore **twelve fruits**, **each tree yielding its fruit every month**. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

Okay, let's take another jump over to the story of **Cain and Abel**. I am making the assumption that you already know the story quite well. First, let's take a look at the **professions** of the two:

*Bereshith 4:2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now **Abel was a keeper of sheep**, but **Cain was a tiller of the ground**.*

A man who is a "**tiller of the ground**" remains **close to the ground**. These **farmers** generally end up **living in permanent dwellings such as houses**. The "**keepers of sheep**" **wander** with their **flocks** and **generally live in tents**. The "**tiller of the ground**" is **nourished by the produce and fruit of the ground** while the "**keeper of sheep**" enjoys the **meat and wool of his sheep**.

Cain and Abel will set the **paradigm** for these **two lifestyles**; one which **keeps his eyes on ארצה**, and the **other which worships the earth and his own skillfulness in the world**. While it is true that **Adam and Eve** tended to the **garden**, **Cain** was now **tilling cursed ground, outside of the garden**. What are the **differences** between the **farmer and the shepherd**? **Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch** in his commentary on the text describes them both (condensed):

"**Agriculture** demands all a person's physical strength...**he needs to devote his whole life to his bodily existence**. The concept of '**Kayin**,' (**Cain**, meaning **acquisition**) – **self-recognition and the pride associated with acquiring** – are most evident in the farmer. **By the sweat of his brow he has made his ground bear fruit, and it becomes something of ultimate value for him** – it becomes part of his personality, he holds onto it and settles.... The farmer is a slave to his field, and the field draws him towards it...**he will easily be brought to admiration of the forces of nature**, upon whose influences the success of his field depends. **Faith in God** and in the **superiority of man was first lost among the agricultural nations**. It was there that **idol worship first developed**.

"**In contrast, the life of the shepherd is most elevated**. He is **concerned principally with living things**. His care of them arouses within him **humane feelings and sympathy for suffering**. His **acquisitions are portable**. The **flock needs the shepherd's care**, but **their existence is not in his hands**. Thus the **shepherd is protected from the danger of overestimating his own value and that of his property**. His **profession does not occupy all his strength and efforts**. His **spirit is**

invested in his labor to a lesser degree, and **remains open to Godly and humane values**. For this reason **our forefathers were shepherds**, and **Moshe and David also shepherded flocks**. In contrast we find, **‘For every shepherd is an abomination to Egypt’** (Bereshith 46:34). **All the problems associated with agriculture which we mentioned above existed in Egypt. Egyptian culture was based on agriculture. This found expression in paganism on one hand and enslavement of people on the other....’**

Another Hebrew sage, **Hillel Zeitlin**, writes:

“The **Holy Scriptures** almost always **prefers a shepherd to a tiller of the soil**. **Kayin (Cain)** was a **tiller of soil** while **Hevel (Abel)** was a **shepherd**; **Hevel’s offering is accepted** while **Kayin’s is not**. We are told that **Noah was a ‘man of the ground,’** obviously not in his favor, since we read later that **‘He drank from the wine and became inebriated and he was uncovered inside his tent.’** The forefathers were shepherds; **Yaakov (Jacob)** was a **‘dweller in tents’** while **Esav (Esau)** was a **‘man of the field.’** **Yaakov’s sons were shepherds**; **‘Moshe kept the flock....’** (Shemot 3:1); **David tended his father’s flock**. **Mishlei (Proverbs)** speaks in **favor of shepherding... (27:23-27)**; **Amos** was one of the **herdsmen of Tekoa (Amos 1:1)**...

“But **why does the Torah prefer shepherds to tillers of the ground?** Did God not place **Adam in Gan (Garden) Eden** in order **‘to work it and to guard it?’** ...working the land involves the concept of **private ownership – acquisition – by the farmer**, and the **Holy Scriptures do not recognize a private individual’s rights over land, except under the known conditions and limitations.**”

But **man needed to work the ground once he entered the Promised Land**. Most of the great patriarchs that we read about were **shepherds in a period preceding Israel’s settlement of the land**. **Rav Hirsch** gives the **remedy for this inherent problem**:

“The **Torah anticipates the chronic dangers inherent in agriculture and prescribes the remedy**. **Shabbat and shemitta** (the sabbatical year) forever **testify that the earth belongs to God, and man is His servant**. The **agricultural laws**, such as the **prohibitions of mixing seeds and the instructions for when to eat of the fruit of young trees on one hand and the positive injunctions of leftover produce for the poor on the other** remind man of **God’s presence, cautioning him to maintain brotherly and neighborly love**. Thus the **Torah solves the moral problem of agriculture**; in this way a **society of God-fearing farmers is created, all sharing brotherly love and equality**. But **outside of the Torah framework a danger is presented to faith in God and to the freedom and equality of all men.**”

Therefore, according to both of these commentators, **Cain is the representative and founder of the culture of tillers of the earth BEFORE יהוה gave His Torah commandments**. Becoming a **farmer had a negative influence on Cain’s character** and this **caused Elohim not to accept his offering**. **Abel appears to have demonstrated a quality of heart and mind that Cain did not possess**. It is a **fundamental principle of Judaism** that the **act of worship in making offerings must come from genuine devotion of the heart...a circumcised heart**.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to Yah a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...

Within the restrictions that יהוה has placed, working the ground does not have to lead to sin. Although **sin may indeed “crouch at the door”**, nevertheless **“we can rule over it”**:

Bereshith 4:6 So יְהוָה said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"⁷ "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door (פֶּתַח). And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Let's look at the word interpreted "**door**" (פֶּתַח). We will see this "**door**" in several **significant verses** throughout the Scriptures:

- **Door of the ark** (Bereshith 6:16)
- **Door of Abraham's tent** (Bereshith 18:1)
- **Door of Lot's house** (Bereshith 19:11)

A "**door**" is an **entrance** to "**something**", thus the **question** for us is – **sin is lying at the door to what?** יְהוָה **admonished and rebuked Cain** and set before him a **choice**. It appears that **Cain** had an **opportunity to repent of his error**, but he **went on to follow temptation** and **kill his brother**. What would have been his **positive choice**?

Revelation 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.²⁰ "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."²¹ "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Yeshua...He is the same yesterday, today, and forever...rebukes and chastens us. But His **desire** is for us to "**be zealous and repent**". It is the "**door**" of our hearts that **He stands and knocks at**. If we "**open the door**", He will **come in**. This makes us **overcomers** of our **sin!**

Here's one more little tidbit on "**doors**". The letter **dalet** (ד) is a **picture of a door**. We are familiar with the name, **יהודה**. Let's add the **door** (ד) to the name.... **יהודה־ד**. Now we have the **name Yehuda** (Judah, from which we get Jews), the **tribe from which Yeshua came**. **Yeshua**, in all His **Jewishness**, is the **door** (ד) to the **heart of יהוה** as represented by the **tribe** from which He came.

Okay, here's the last little thought. After the **loss of Abel**, the son that was born was named **Seth**. He in turn **named his son Enosh**. **Enosh** means "**man**" in the same way that **Adam** means "**man**", but **Enosh** puts **emphasis on the mortality and frailty of man**. It comes from a **root** which means "**to be sick**". **Man was learning**, and this is **reflected** in the **name Enosh**. He saw his **sin sickness** and would later come to realize that only by **opening the door** to the **Messiah** would he find **restoration and wholeness**. It's still our **choice**. **Open the door**.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle